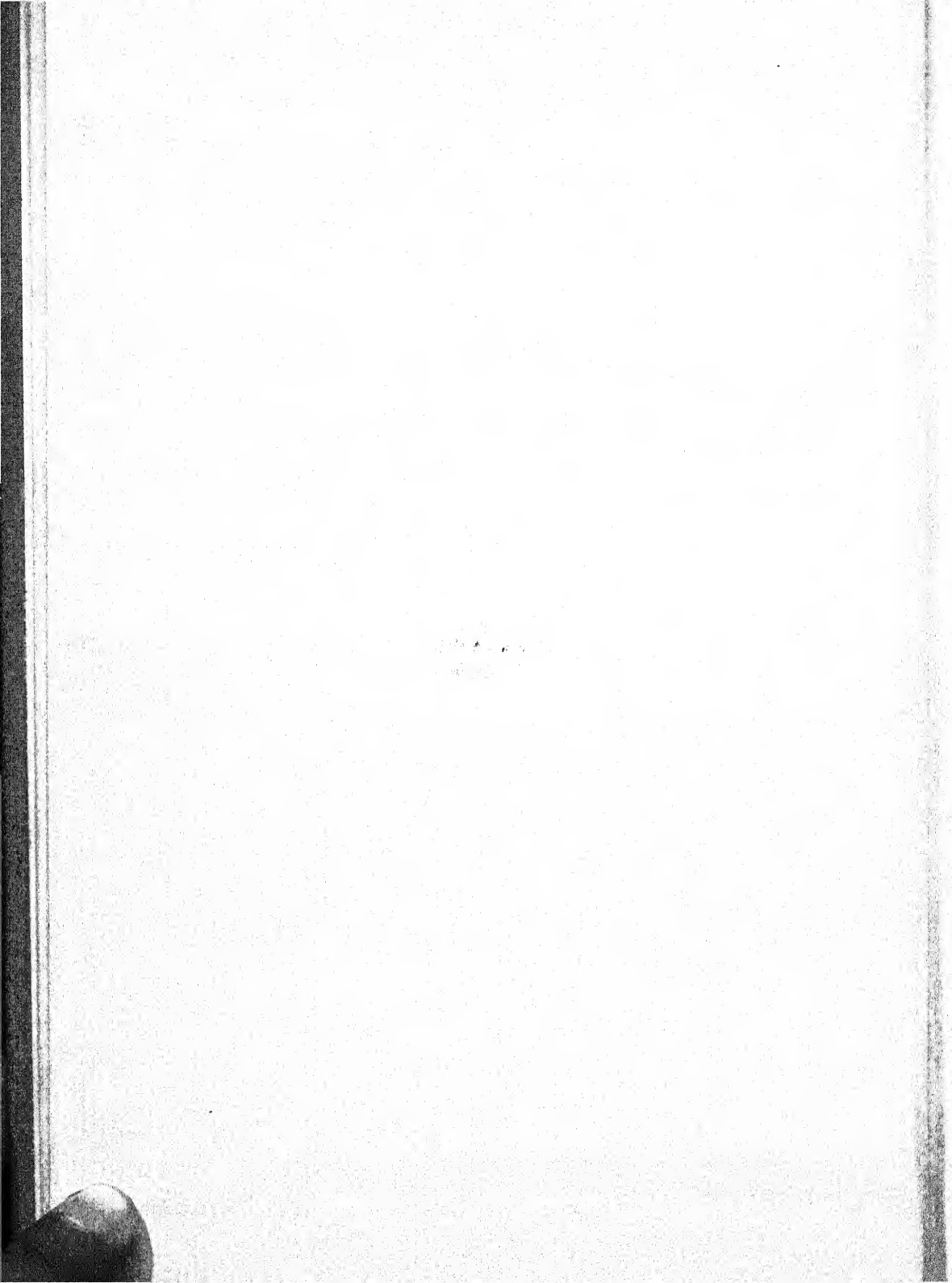
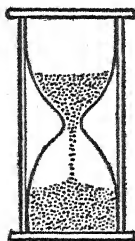


PROTESTANTISM'S HOUR OF DECISION





Protestantism's Hour of Decision



JUSTIN WROE NIXON

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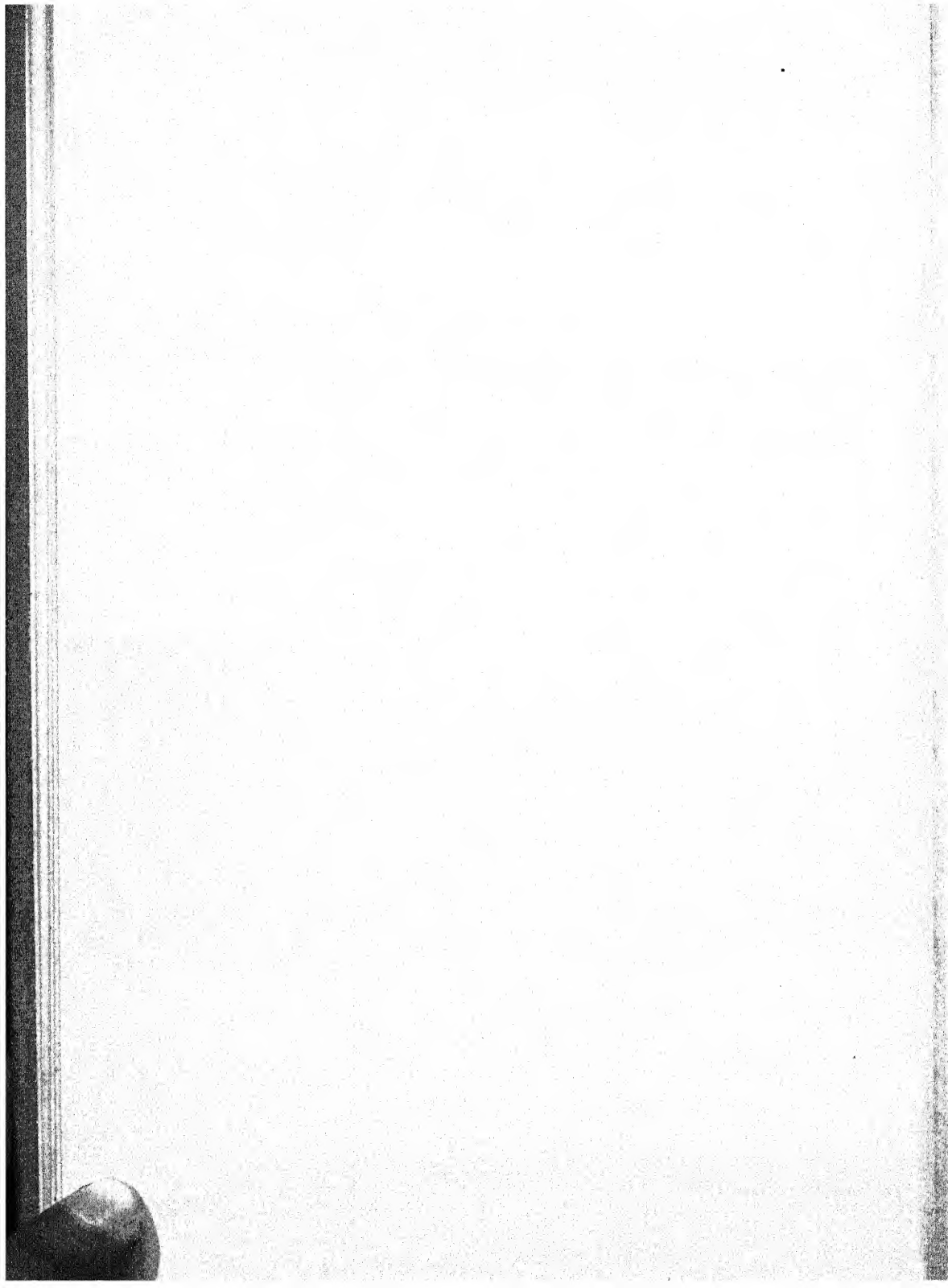
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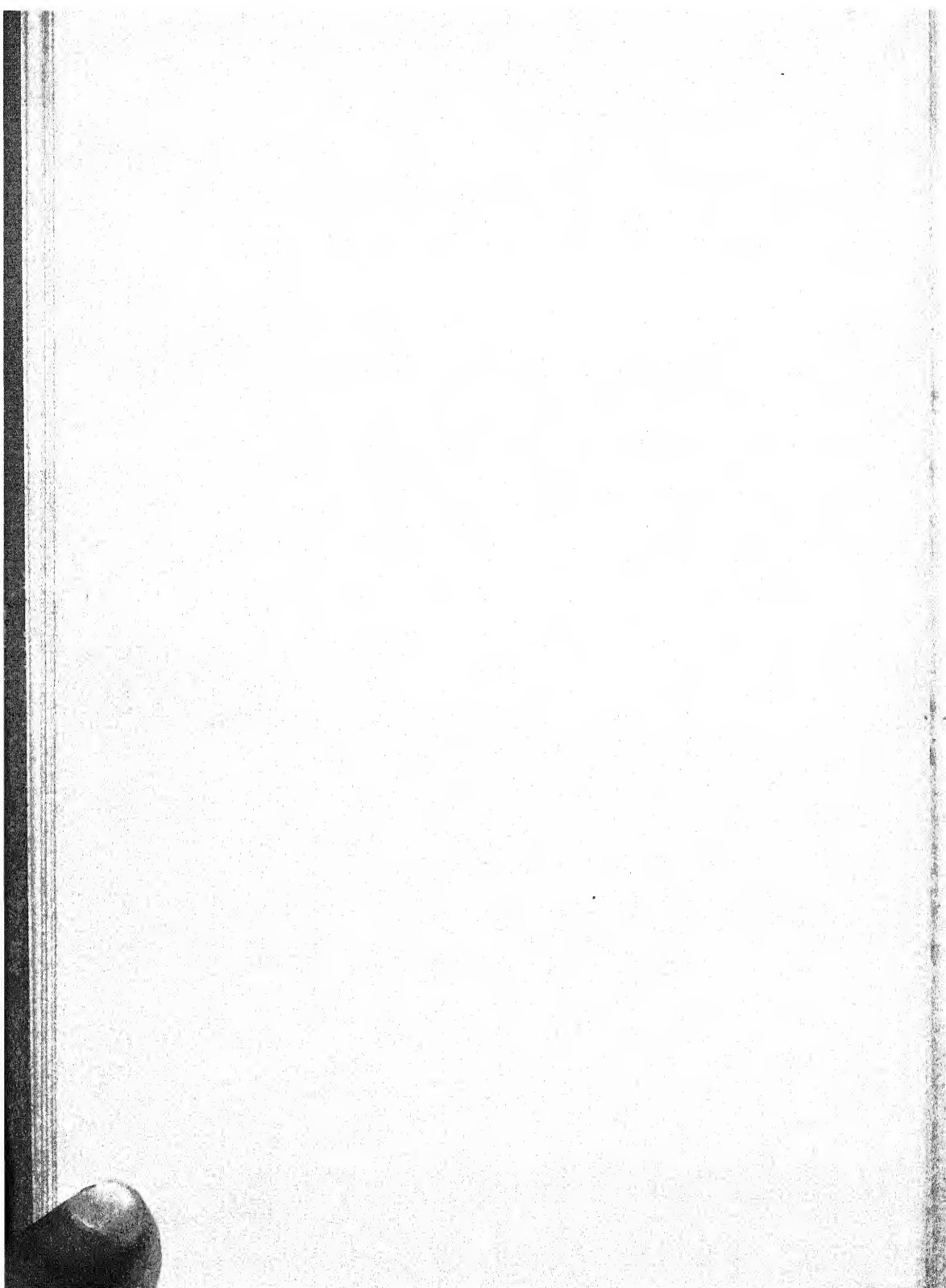
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INTRODUCTION

THERE is probably no intelligent person in America who doubts that we are living in a period of grave peril to the values which mankind has cherished through generations. Nor will this period pass quickly. Before it reaches its end and a more stable equilibrium of human life is achieved, profound changes reaching to the foundations of organized society are likely to occur.

In such a period it behooves the members of the Christian church to consider their spiritual heritage and the means by which it may be preserved. That heritage, in the case of American Protestants, has two main roots: one running back into the religious tradition of Christianity, the other into the political tradition of democracy. To the writer of this book, both of these roots are essential to the vitality of those types of Christianity with whose future he is most deeply concerned.

There are those who will question whether democracy or any other political or social form is essential to the healthy growth of Christianity in the world. To them we should have to reply that there have indeed been forms of Christianity able to survive under despotism, and that there are forms of Christianity today to which democracy is apparently unessential.

Protestantism, however—at least in the forms most intimately associated with the founding and the development of this country—seems to be dependent upon the system of rights implicit in democracy. One can hardly imagine aggressive types of Protestantism, which seek the realization of their ideals in society at large—such as the churches of the Calvinistic tradition—as being tolerated after the framework of democracy has been broken down. It is apparent that the only churches the totalitarian régimes will tolerate are those that will subject themselves to the purposes of the state, or confine their message to the otherworldly emphasis.

This book has been written in the hope that it may encourage the discussion by American Protestants of the values they have at stake in the present "time of troubles." The first three chapters deal with the Christian faith which comes down to us across the centuries; with the special contributions of the American environment to Christianity; and with modern democracy and its relations to Protestantism. That there are values in this inheritance worthy of every effort to maintain them is one of the convictions underlying the argument of this book.

The other conviction is that Protestantism and democracy cannot survive except as they prove to be dynamic factors in dealing with the problems of the new age. They cannot stand still. They must re-establish themselves in the new age and assume its tasks.

These tasks are now so difficult that it is clear people with democratic institutions cannot perform them successfully without a vital religion. Can Protestantism furnish that religion? "There they stand, Protestantism confronting democracy, each like the side of an arch hardly able to stand alone. If they stand apart they will probably both be crushed under the weight of new conditions and new problems of the world's life. If they stand together they may not only support one another, but sustain the burden of a new age of man."* The last three chapters of the book, accordingly, deal with problems in the economic and international spheres, and in the sphere of organized religion, in which Protestantism and democracy must co-operate in order to find satisfactory solutions.

Some of the material in these chapters has been used in addresses before the International Council of Religious Education, the Ohio Baptist Pastor's Conference, and the North Carolina Council of Churches. The writer is grateful for criticisms and suggestions which have come to him from members of these bodies. He is also grateful to Mrs. Gladys Gilkey Calkins, and his sons, John H. Nixon and Charles R. Nixon, for reading the manuscript.

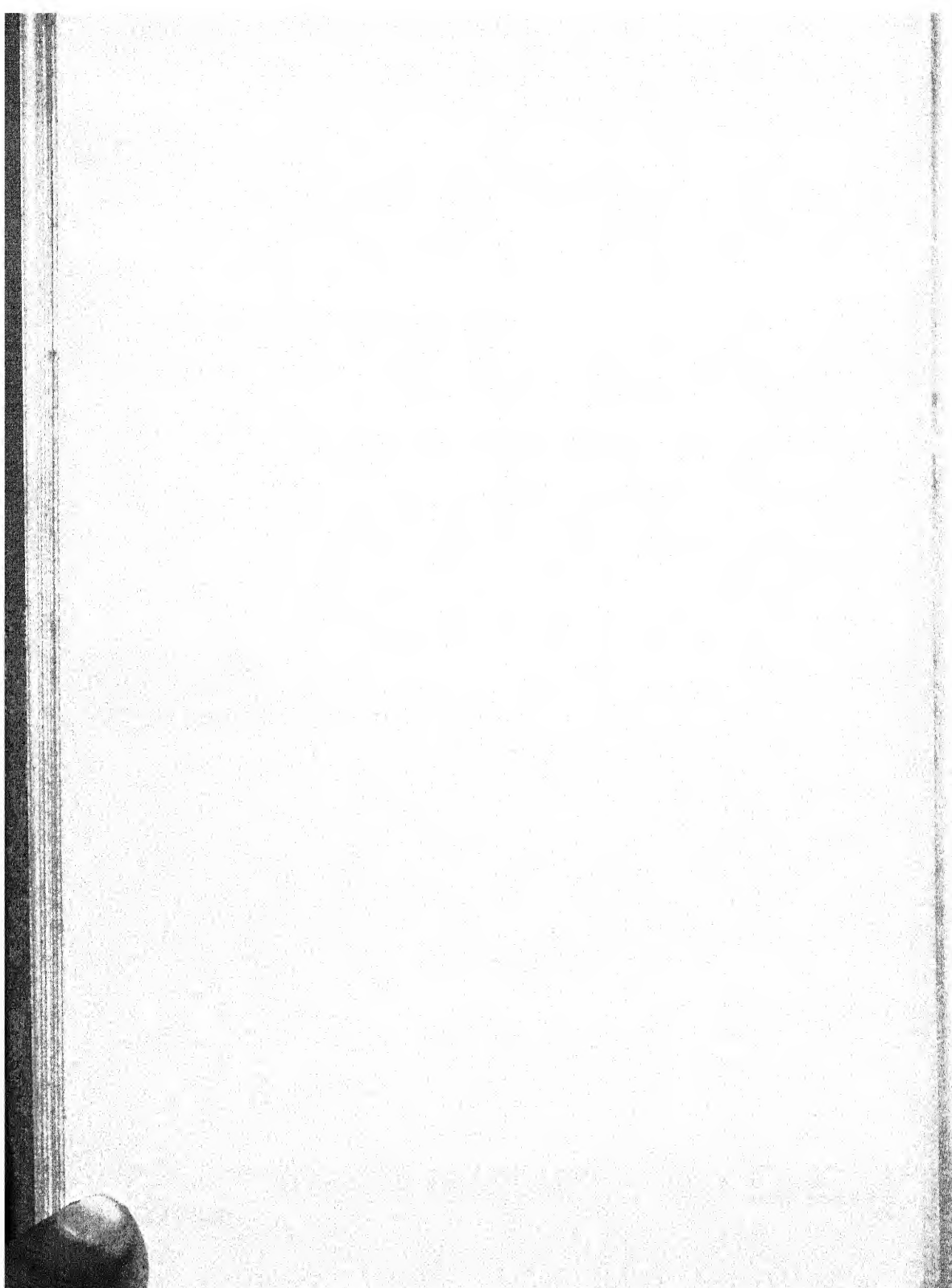
J. W. N.

JULY, 1940.

* From the last chapter of the book.

THE ENDURING CHRISTIAN FAITH

1



THE ENDURING CHRISTIAN FAITH

1

I

ONE Sunday morning five years ago in a city of Soviet Russia, in company with a friend who understood Russian, I visited a small Protestant congregation assembled for its service of worship. Police were in front of the building where the meeting was being held. After the service was over the pastor told my companion that he was the last of eight ministers of his faith who had been at work in that city. The others had been driven away or imprisoned. This pastor was afraid to leave the building by the front entrance, where the police were stationed. He stole out through the rear. My companion and I were followed for five miles, on street cars and afterwards on foot, by two women who finally ventured to approach us. One of these women said that she was the wife of one of the pastors who had been arrested. For six months, since he had been seized by the government, they had heard nothing from him and did not know whether he was alive or dead. They wondered whether we who had been interested enough in their work to attend the service could tell them anything about him.

That experience has remained in my mind as a symbol of the defensive position which the Christian church today occupies in many parts of the world. Whether one thinks of the Protestants, persecuted in Roumania, of the Catholics in Mexico, or of the ten thousand clergymen, Protestant and Catholic, who have been imprisoned at one time or another in Nazi Germany, the picture begins to develop in one's mind of the church as a beleaguered city, this wall taken, that moat crossed, and enemies penetrating one bastion after another.

Here in America the church is not threatened by attack from without but by the spirit of defeatism from within. The causes which lie behind the rise of such a spirit are various. The churches



are old institutions which have accumulated habits and customs which have been outmoded by developments in the world at large. For instance, Professor Walter Rauschenbusch used to say that most Protestant denominations were essentially rural organizations surviving in a civilization whose most characteristic traits were now urban. The slowness with which necessary organizational changes are made in an age whose tempo is increasingly revolutionary dampens the enthusiasm, particularly of the younger generation.

To intellectuals the gulf between the views they absorb with their education and the doctrines of the church seems so wide that they cannot find ways of bridging it. To social reformers the concern of the churches for private devotion and personal faith seems irrelevant in a time when the dominant forces appear to be impersonal powers battling in the arena of economics and politics.

Another reason for the low morale of many nominal adherents of the church in America is the degree to which our time has become attuned to novelty. Through the application of science to the processes of production and consumption, devices, comforts, and luxuries have come upon us in vast profusion. Where one hundred years ago, it is said, that only about two thousand articles were exposed for sale, today 300,000 different kinds of articles are being sold by somebody to someone, and hour by hour the advertisers tell us that a new device has just been made which we must have because it is the latest. The church, however, speaks to men of old questions, and the best answers to those questions are frequently old answers. The adjustment between such an institution and the mentality of an age focused upon novelty is a difficult one. It is the influence of this mentality which accounts for the suggestion that for every intellectual estranged from the church by Charles Darwin, a dozen novelty-seekers have been kept away, figuratively speaking, by Henry Ford.

A factor probably more important than any we have mentioned in accounting for the lack of religious concern in America is the sense of mundane prosperity and security which has grown up in this country during the last three generations. The war between the States (1861-1865) was the last great shock to our confidence in the enduring nature of our frame of life. Where the frame of life has been broken down in the nations abroad there

has been a revival of religion—that is, a concern for the deeper issues of men's lives, their cosmic relationships and their standards of value. This revival has taken different forms—some novel, as in the essentially religious enthusiasm of Communists and Nazis, and some conventional, as in the increased attendance upon church services in Germany. Whether novel or conventional, these revivals of religious interest have been due to the fact that the crust of security has been broken through and men have found themselves hanging over depths from which forces of volcanic violence were pouring forth. We have had no such experience in America in recent times, but the events which are now transpiring on the world-stage are probably bringing such an experience steadily nearer.

Meanwhile, to the outward view, the church in America seems like a heavy freighter in a harbor filled with yachts built for maximum sail spread in a moderate wind. It is old. It is drab in appearance. It is difficult to get under way. It moves slowly. The members of its crew seem discouraged as other craft dart around it, so modern in their appointments, so appealing to the crowds upon the shore. Few realize that the older vessel has been built for hurricanes rather than for calm seas, that it has weathered the storms of the ages, and that it comes into port laden with a faith that is the most precious spiritual inheritance of the Western man.

That faith is the secret and soul of the church. Without it the church has neither function nor significance. If the experience of impaired security which affects Europe comes in some form to America we are likely to have a hearing for that faith such as we have not had for decades. But what is that faith? To this question we now turn.

II

One element of the church's faith which in our time has already become of widespread concern is its belief in the inherent worth of man as man. In the face of the ruthless and cruel abolition of all legal safeguards of human dignity, under communist and fascist governments, this ancient belief of the church has become a rallying center of human hope.

The belief itself, as it now exists in the minds of Christians, consists of various strands. There is in it the ancient Hebrew conception of man as a creature of God, the head of creation, of man made in the image of God himself. "Thou has made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor." Alongside this conception of man as a creature, indeed as the child of God, there is also in ancient Hebrew thought the conviction that man is a sinner, falling short of God's will for him, and perennially drawn into rebellion against God. Both of these ideas have passed into and become a part of the Christian tradition.

There is likewise in that tradition something derived from the Greeks: the ancient Greek idea of the soul, that within man which comes from a higher realm, a divine spark from the altar of the Eternal. Professor Whitehead has commented, in his *Adventures in Ideas*, on the influence of Plato's idea of the soul during the centuries which have elapsed since Plato's time. Whitehead thinks of it as one of the great humanitarian forces of human history. Age after age this idea of something divine in man has dashed up against a hoary evil like the waves of the sea against a crag. For generations nothing seems to happen, and then suddenly from the continuous impact of the idea the crag of evil falls.

There is in the church's belief also an element specifically Christian—the conviction that man is a creature for whom God cared so much that he sent his Son to take upon himself the burden of rescuing man from sin and death. Again we have an idea whose influence has been incalculable. Dr. T. R. Glover has given us illustrations of that influence. There is the incident from the life of Synesius, scholar and thinker, bishop of Tripoli in the fifth century. The new governor of the province has begun to treat the people with great brutality. Synesius sends a letter to the governor protesting against this treatment, and he appeals for a humane policy in the words, "Precious among creatures is man, precious in that for him Christ was crucified." A similar instance comes from the sixteenth century in England. At the time of Kett's rebellion, in Norfolk, a representative of the Court went to meet Kett. In the course of the interview he spoke of Kett's followers as "villeins." Kett's reply has come down across nearly four centuries, "Call no man villein who was redeemed by the precious blood-shedding of Jesus Christ."¹

The Renaissance, with its revival of interest in the achievements of ancient civilization, added its contribution to the estimate of man which has become a part of the church's belief; an estimate typified by Hamlet's exclamation, "What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! . . . in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!" Still another strand in the belief concerning man (certainly in America) has been woven in from the democratic and humanitarian movements of the last two centuries: the assumption, having its roots in the far past, that man of whatever race or class is endowed with large possibilities of growth.

It is this entire tradition out of which the modern Christian belief in man has come that is challenged by conditions of the present. A low estimate of man as man, with no dignity and no rights that a government need respect, is one of the characteristics of totalitarian rule. But the sense of man's greatness has also been unconsciously impaired by the influence of science and the achievements of technology. Man as the last and greatest of the apes, man as a bundle of instincts and complexes to be cleverly manipulated by the psychiatrist, man as an organ of desire to be played upon by the advertiser, man as a creature to be satisfied by the soothing emollients of bodily comfort and varied entertainment—these are conceptions of man which have come out of the popularization of science and concentration on material success. They have affected the moral and spiritual life of the democracies more than has the propaganda of the dictators.

But there is coming among us a sense of loss, a sense that something precious is missing. It was a symbol of that loss that I found two years ago in the old Washington homestead, Sulgrave Manor, in England. In one of the upper rooms we stopped for a moment while the guide told us its story. He said that at an earlier time the room had had a low ceiling, composed of lath and plaster. It was the low room that the inhabitants of the house had known for many years. But recent owners, wondering what was above the ceiling, had torn it out and had uncovered the splendid rough-beamed roof, rising to a peak, of an old Benedictine abbey. For the manor had been originally a house of religion, and before the ceiling of lath and plaster had been put in that upper room,

the thoughts and prayers of men for generations had mounted along these steeply sloping beams toward the Eternal.

I came away thinking that that room is like the soul of man in the modern world. That soul now is a room filled with creature comforts and ceiled in with pride in its own knowledge and achievements. But ever and anon man is haunted by the feeling that at one time he was more than he is today. He hears Professor James Harvey Robinson say, "Man is just an animal," but he is haunted by the fact that once he was one whom the Greeks called *anthropos*, "an upward-looking creature." There are a myriad of voices in our world today, outside as well as inside the church, that are crying, "Let man be man again, man as he was to the Hebrew prophets and in Greek tragedy, the man of Plato and the New Testament, the man of Dante and Shakespeare, man an earth-born creature, but with Eternity in his heart."

The belief in the inherent worth of man as man is one of the most essential elements in the church's faith, and in its message to the times.

III

The discussion of what might be called the first article in the church's faith has already introduced us to the second, its belief in God. For in Christian thought, as in various other religions, there is the assumption that man lives out his life in a superhuman or supernatural world from which his worth is ultimately derived.

It is to the deeply rooted nature of this assumption in the lives of unsophisticated Christians that Philip Barry calls attention in his play, *Here Come the Clowns*. The play opens with an interruption of the last act of a vaudeville performance in a theater by Dan Clancy, the clown, who comes upon the stage and says that he is looking for someone. It cannot be that someone is not there. As the play proceeds you realize that the one whom he is seeking must be God. And Clancy is looking for God, because the misery and trouble which have come to him in such abundance, to someone, somewhere, must have a meaning.

Of course the simple Irish soul of Dan Clancy thinks of God after the manner of the Catholic tradition, but the craving he

confesses and the sense of a superhuman environment which that craving reveals are everywhere about our world. As I heard the appeal of Dan Clancy one evening in the theater, I thought of the song of the low-caste boatman of Bengal which Professor Hocking has passed on to us:

I am a lamp afloat on the water;
At what ghat didst Thou set me afloat?
O Friend, End of all endless movement,
How many bends of the river are still before me?
And with what call wilt thou reveal thyself to me?
Thou wilt take me from the water,
And there, under the protection of thy arm,
Wilt extinguish the burning of the whole long journey!²

It is a far cry from an illiterate boatman of India to a modern dramatist like Philip Barry, but they both bear witness to the enduring situation of man. In both there is the suggestion that man passes his life on a stage where forces greater than those he can understand are engaged, but that, if he could see farther, he might find One who does understand and who in the midst of the immensity and confusion still cares for him.

The assumption of the superhuman environment of man's life was everywhere in the Roman world when Christianity began to be propagated. The early Christians did not have to discuss with their pagan neighbors whether there is a superhuman aspect of the world, but only the nature of that aspect. The more one reads the early Christian literature, the more one realizes that the framework of thought, Christian and non-Christian, was much the same. The Platonic and Stoic philosophies, Gnostic wisdom and mythology, the mystery religions and the widespread influence of Judaism had made possible many contacts between Christianity and the non-Christian mind. Everywhere was the assumption, embodied in the first words of the Bible, "In the beginning, God."

To a world that was already conscious of the divine, Christianity brought a conception of God that was the outgrowth of Judaism and the experience of the followers of Jesus. Over against the various cults worshiping a multitude of divinities, it called men to the one sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth. In contrast to the moral grossness of many of the popular gods, it proclaimed a God wholly righteous and just. To a society which

felt that it was in the grip of fortune and destiny, it brought the good news of a fatherly God, responsive to man's need and solicitous for his welfare.

Such was and is the church's belief in God. Concerning the details of that belief there has been endless discussion, and probably always will be. His ways are higher than our ways and his thoughts than our thoughts. But it is not the element of difference in the various contemporary conceptions of God that is the characteristic feature of our present situation. It is the fact that the very assumption of a divine element in the world, the assumption of Dan Clancy and the Bengal boatman, of the pagan society in which Christianity emerged, and of the Bible—that assumption has been so obscured in the modern mind that the contact of Christianity or any other historic religion with that mind has been greatly impaired.

The man of our age is perilously divorced from the assumptions essential to his life. He enjoys the devices provided by science but is not interested in pure science, and he fears the application of science to social problems. He echoes the phrases of democracy but does not ask for the terms on which democracy can be preserved. He wants to keep out of war, but does not ask, as yet, why war comes or what is his own responsibility for preventing it.

Why men have become so divorced from the basic assumptions of their actual existence is a question. The separation between education and religion in America may have something to do with it. Another factor is probably the overemphasis of the educational process on the practical side, at the expense of those studies that reveal the age-old problems of man as a moral and spiritual creature. I was interested a little while ago in a magazine article. It told the story of an educated man who, in these depressed times, was engaged in shoveling dirt in order to feed his family. He said that he had two fights, one to do the work itself, with its painful and difficult details, the other to hold on to a philosophy of life that made it worth while to do the work at all. Is it unfair to suggest that modern education by and large has been concerned with the first fight this man mentioned rather than the second?

The enormous growth of the mechanical structure of our

civilization, which seems so self-sustaining, is probably the most important influence responsible for this concentration on the immediate and the practical. We are like the people who see nothing in Italy but trains running on time, and nothing in Germany but the fact that everyone has a job. We are passengers on the great steamship, "Civilization." As long as the ship keeps driving ahead we are likely to be absorbed in interesting private concerns, oblivious to wind and wave and the terrors of the deep.

But as the educated man shoveling dirt was driven back to the search for a philosophy of life that made it worth while to go on, so the shocks our civilization is sustaining are compelling us to seek again for the assumptions of a worthy, human existence. And among all these assumptions there is none of greater significance than the conviction that man is a creature who lives in a superhuman environment at whose heart is the Divine Being to whom he is ultimately responsible. Only with the recovery of such a conviction will there be possible a genuine humanism which does not split man off from his world but leaves his nature entire in the material and spiritual environment which produced him, and which supports him in his highest aspirations. Only then shall we have again a framework of common thought in which it will be possible to consider seriously the distinctive elements of Christian faith.

IV

The assumption that man lives in the presence of a superhuman spiritual reality Christianity shares with other religions; peculiar to Christianity is its view of the nature of that reality. For at the heart of Christianity lives the belief of the early Christians that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God—the God of righteousness, of justice, and of love—had come to them in the face of Jesus Christ. This belief the church enshrined in the central article of its faith, the doctrine of the Incarnation: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

The belief that God has revealed himself for man's salvation in a person who lived at a definite time and place has always been a stumbling-block for those who do not share the Christian faith. At bottom, one doubts whether it is any more incredible

than the beliefs in the inherent worth of man and in a sovereign God of righteousness, of justice, and of love. To hold such beliefs in a world as infested as ours is with appalling suffering and unimaginable cruelty is a great act of faith. But no life-changing faith ever comes easily.

There have always been intellectual difficulties in the Christian faith, as in the alternatives to it. The great advantage which Christianity has had is, that it has so challenged the moral life of man on its deepest levels that it has equipped him with moral resources for dealing with his intellectual difficulties.

The Christian belief in the Incarnation began with an event, with the life and death of a person, and with the continued sway of that person over the lives of his followers. For the interpretation of such an event abstractions are required, but abstractions in themselves are not sufficient, no matter how scientifically they have been evoked from historical facts. The greatest events demand for their understanding the poet, the artist, the myth-maker and the lover, as well as the historian and the theologian.

It was of an event in her own life that Mrs. Browning was apparently thinking when she wrote:

The face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm.³

Whatever the event Mrs. Browning had in mind, the outward features of it may well have been unimpressive; but its permanent significance was of vast proportions.

If we take these words of Mrs. Browning's about an event in the life of an individual and hold them up as a lens through which to view what Christians deem the supreme event in the life of the race, we shall come close to an appreciation of the Christian testimony concerning Christ.

The reason the belief that God had revealed himself in Christ was so important to the early Christians has often been misconceived. The changes in the outlook of mankind have set the

issues of that early time in a false perspective. The problem of those early centuries was not primarily that of the divinity of Christ. The world was full of gods and half-gods. The church could have had Christ as a half-god at any time. The primary issue was, what god or how much of a god was revealed in Christ. It was the stubborn insistence of those early believers that it was no less a one than the Most High himself who had visited them in Jesus Christ. When they had come to him they had come to the Ultimate. Henceforth let kings and emperors do their worst; they had found an unshakable standing-ground amid the chaos of a dissolving world.

The value of the Christian belief in the Incarnation grows out of the fact that everything in religion depends finally on the character of God. The divine character determines what kind of conduct on the part of men God will approve. And the sense of God's approval or disapproval works powerfully to stimulate or inhibit human action. I recall an incident from my childhood that illustrates the effect which follows the establishment of a connection between the character of God and a certain kind of conduct. My parents had discovered that I was lying to them. I remember vividly what they did. With the utmost kindness, they took me aside and knelt down and prayed that God would keep me from telling untruths. A fixed emotional connection between God and truthfulness has remained in my mind ever since. Such connections appear constantly in the literature of religion; as when Joseph, tempted by Potiphar's wife, exclaims, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" The positive power generated when men feel that their lives are in harmony with the character and purpose of God is suggested by the career of J. Hudson Taylor, who says that he went out to China under the conviction that God was saying to him, "I am going to evangelize Inland China, and I will do it through you if you will walk with me."

In the light of the dynamic connection between the character of God and the conduct of men, one wonders whether any single moral influence in history is equal to that which has been released by the association of the portrait of Christ as drawn by the writers of the New Testament with the character of God as revealed in the Old Testament.

V

The doctrine of the Incarnation, however, stands not only for the fact of God's revelation in Christ, but likewise for the way in which the God, so revealed, redeems man. The Incarnation implies not only a person but a process. With that process the church has associated the work of the Holy Spirit.

The central idea of the Incarnation is that the transcendent God became and becomes immanent in man. The early church expressed that idea under the form of Greek philosophy, as when Irenaeus said, "God, the Logos, became what we are in order that he should make us that which he is." Today the philosophy of the first centuries is not so congenial to many minds. But the idea of the fusion of the transcendent and the immanent may be found under other forms of thought.

Take, for instance, the biological world. The dominant law of the physical realm is apparently the second law of thermo-dynamics, according to which the materials of nature drift steadily toward a more inert state. It is a process of disintegration. But across this vast trend toward disintegration moves the process of life, which catches hold of various particles of inert substance and organizes them into forms of far greater significance. It catches up a raindrop and changes it into a rose petal; another it transforms into a thought in the brain, which thought flows out at the point of a pen into a poem. If one of these raindrops could translate its experiences into words, would it not say something like this: "I was dead and I became alive. Something beyond me took hold of me and transformed me so that I became a part of a new order of being."

In like manner, if a bit of glass in one of the windows of the cathedral at Chartres could speak, what would it say of what the pattern in the glass had done to it? And suppose that a string of Kreisler's violin could talk, what would it say about what had happened to a strip of intestine from a sheep under the magic touch of the master's bow? There are many analogies that may be invoked today to describe the relationship between man and the supreme reality which our fathers describe under the term, Incarnation. In them all would be the idea that man is redeemed

by a process, in which something that he dares to call divine enters into and gathers up into itself our frail and imperfect mortality. From this point of view the Christian doctrine of the atonement begins to be intelligible. Behind that doctrine lies the conviction that the divine element in the world has entered into the life of man to share the burden of sin and evil for which man is responsible. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

The great modern enterprises of Christianity are also illumined by the thought of the Incarnation. Forty years ago such men as Graham Taylor, Washington Gladden, and Walter Rauschenbusch began to proclaim what became known as "the social gospel." What did that mean? It meant that across the materialistic drift of American life these men had caught a vision of the movement for a higher order of society which they associated with the Kingdom of God. That movement had entered into them, and had gathered up their lives into itself. The process at work in such lives is recognized even by those known to be unfriendly to Christian truth; as an extreme example we may quote the following words of Bertrand Russell: "Those who best promote life do not have life for their purpose. They aim rather at what seems like a gradual incarnation, a bringing into our human existence of something eternal . . . remote from . . . the devouring jaws of time."⁴

Was there ever a generation since that of the first Christians which seemed so ripe for the creative work of the God of the Incarnation as our generation today? How real and how powerful seems the trend toward death in our civilization. Death is all that a great many wise men can see. But does not the very agony of our time mean that only something from God can bring reconciliation and life? Across the trend toward death there moves another process, that of birth. What is it from God that is now struggling to be born into a world where so many signs point toward dissolution? The power of the Incarnation lies in the fact that it enables men to live with expectancy and hope, even in the darkest hours. Because the Incarnation is a process, it is also a promise finding new fulfillment, generation after generation—a promise in which we may "rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

VI

We have mentioned some of the most important beliefs that make up the Christian faith. To these we would add one other—a belief concerning the church. The beliefs concerning God and man, in the main, Christianity shares with Judaism. The beliefs concerning Christ and salvation Protestants share widely with Catholics. The most important difference between Catholics and Protestants appears in the belief concerning the church.

In the light of our previous discussion, what is the function of the church? Does it not appear that those who have thought of the church as a continuation of the Incarnation have been working on right lines? Certainly, this is a New Testament conception, for Paul speaks of the church as "the body of Christ." In ideal, the church may be said to be the continuing fellowship of those who dedicate themselves to the God revealed in Christ, that his spirit may become in them the power of God unto salvation, for themselves and all who believe "through their word."

Now the fundamental difference between Catholicism and Protestantism appears at this point. To the Catholic (the Roman Catholic in particular) for the church to perform its function effectively a certain structure is necessary, involving a hierarchical authority in government, doctrine, and sacramental worship. The church organized about that authority is the representative of God on earth. To the Protestant the moral and spiritual fellowship of Christians in the church is the matter of greatest significance; the structure by which their relations are governed is of subordinate significance, and subject to modification by experience. Hence the great variety of Protestants. At one extreme are groups whose church structure is formal and rigid; at the other, are collections of friendly folks united by the loosest ties of belief and practice. Hence, also, the adaptability of Protestantism, for with the subordination of structure the responsibility of the individual for the development and expression of his faith increases. Every individual becomes a point where changes in the world's life register themselves, and every individual becomes a potential center of changes in the church.

Those who believe in the church—whether Catholics or Protes-

tants—see in it a visible community which enshrines, however imperfectly, the hope of a spiritual fellowship which the apostle Paul dreamed would ultimately embrace the great body of humanity. The earthly goal of the church is “a civilization of brotherly men,” under the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a goal which the prophets and seers of the church have often associated with “the Kingdom.” By its capacity to enlarge the boundaries of true brotherhood the church must itself be judged. No other human institution provides its critics with such drastic standards by which its achievements may be measured.

Since the World War of 1914–1918 the sense of the importance of the church has been steadily growing in Protestantism. Protestants realize more and more the necessity of group experience for the religious life of the individual. Many of the divisions in the church are seen to be outgrown, while the ideal of a world Christian community to include all the great branches of the church has become ever more appealing.

VII

We have been thinking of some of the primary elements of the Christian faith as it is being carried into the modern world by that venerable institution, the Christian church. It is difficult for anyone who has been reared in that faith to realize how strange its terminology is to a great many people in our time. Such words as God, sin, salvation, redemption, grace, and Incarnation do not belong to the vocabulary of the press, the magazine, and the radio, nor to the technical language of academic philosophy; and the ideas indicated by those words often seem remote. The “salvation”—to use the old Christian term—for which the age is looking, is economic and political, and the “hot gospellers” are the Coughlins, the Townsends, and their kin with their quick remedies for public ills. More important *gospels* are those borne to us from abroad, the *gospels* of Communism, and Fascism. These new *gospels*, as we have pointed out, are essentially religious faiths, with power to release the energies of men.

We have begun our consideration of issues before the church of today with the conviction that if it is to have a vital part in

molding the future of mankind, it, too, must have a faith, a faith at least as dynamic as that of Communism and Fascism. What forms that faith may take as Christians seek solutions for the problems of a new age we do not know. Here we would simply record our conviction that in its essentials the church already possesses such a faith as its most precious inheritance.

It may be that the "time of troubles" will pass in America without awakening a new and vital devotion to the Christian faith. Paul Sabatier, for instance, reminds us of how the French people thronged the churches in France after the national defeat of 1870. But the church had only the old forms and hardened dogmas as the means of communicating its faith, and after a decade the people began to slip away. If such an experience should come to us we are persuaded that it will not be because of the faith itself, but because we who professed it were not sensitive enough to its meaning to interpret and apply it to our time.

At the moment, one of the most encouraging signs is the way in which Christians are inquiring what it is in their faith that has enabled the church to survive generation after generation and to contribute to the ongoing life of men. When they ask that question they discover that the Christian faith is no creed of fitful benevolence, or pale theism gasping out its plea before the bar of modernity that it may be allowed to live a little longer. It is the conviction, which has often seemed both incredible and imperative, that the transcendent and Christlike God is immanent in our world for man's redemption. This is not an easy faith to hold, but when held, it does what Peguy says a great philosophy does, it "introduces a disturbance which puts the world in a turmoil."

The appeal of this faith to the mind, while gradual, is none the less massive. For when we think of what this faith has meant in human life, of its persistence across the centuries, of its concreteness, of its adaptation to the mind of the child and of the sage, of its power to take on new forms and to become the most profound rendering of the meaning of new times, we are moved with awe. And when we compare it with many of the trivialities of current thought, which glisten for a moment on the wave-crest of a transient popularity before passing on into oblivion, we find ourselves saying with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God."

Five years ago in Moscow I had an experience one evening which remains for me a symbol of something in the Christian faith that will prove indestructible, in spite of all the persecution and indifference of the present. I was walking back to my hotel, along the Moscow River. The sun was setting; its direct rays no longer reached the valley, nor the walls of the Kremlin, nor the palace of czars, nor the flag of the Soviet Union which floats above it. But as my vision swept on up it was caught by a glorious yellow flame. It came from the cross on the old Church of the Assumption, where the czars had been crowned. That cross was still the highest point of the Kremlin, the home of Stalin, and the seat of Soviet power. As the sun sank below the horizon, its light lingered at the last on that cross, as if to suggest there was something in it that would be the last thing to die out in human life. Long after the czars had been forgotten, long after the Communists had gone on, and the wisdom of Marx had been gathered into the larger wisdom of the race, long after that material cross had disappeared, something in the "Cross" would still beckon to the human spirit. For it speaks not merely of time, but of eternity; not merely of power, but of love; not merely of man, but of God. "Great is the mystery of godliness."

We have been thinking of the Christianity of the ages. In America that Christianity has assumed a particular form. If we Americans would deal intelligently with the tasks confronting the church, we must keep in mind not merely the enduring elements of its faith, but the characteristics Christians and their institutions have taken on in the American environment. To a consideration of some of these characteristics let us now turn.

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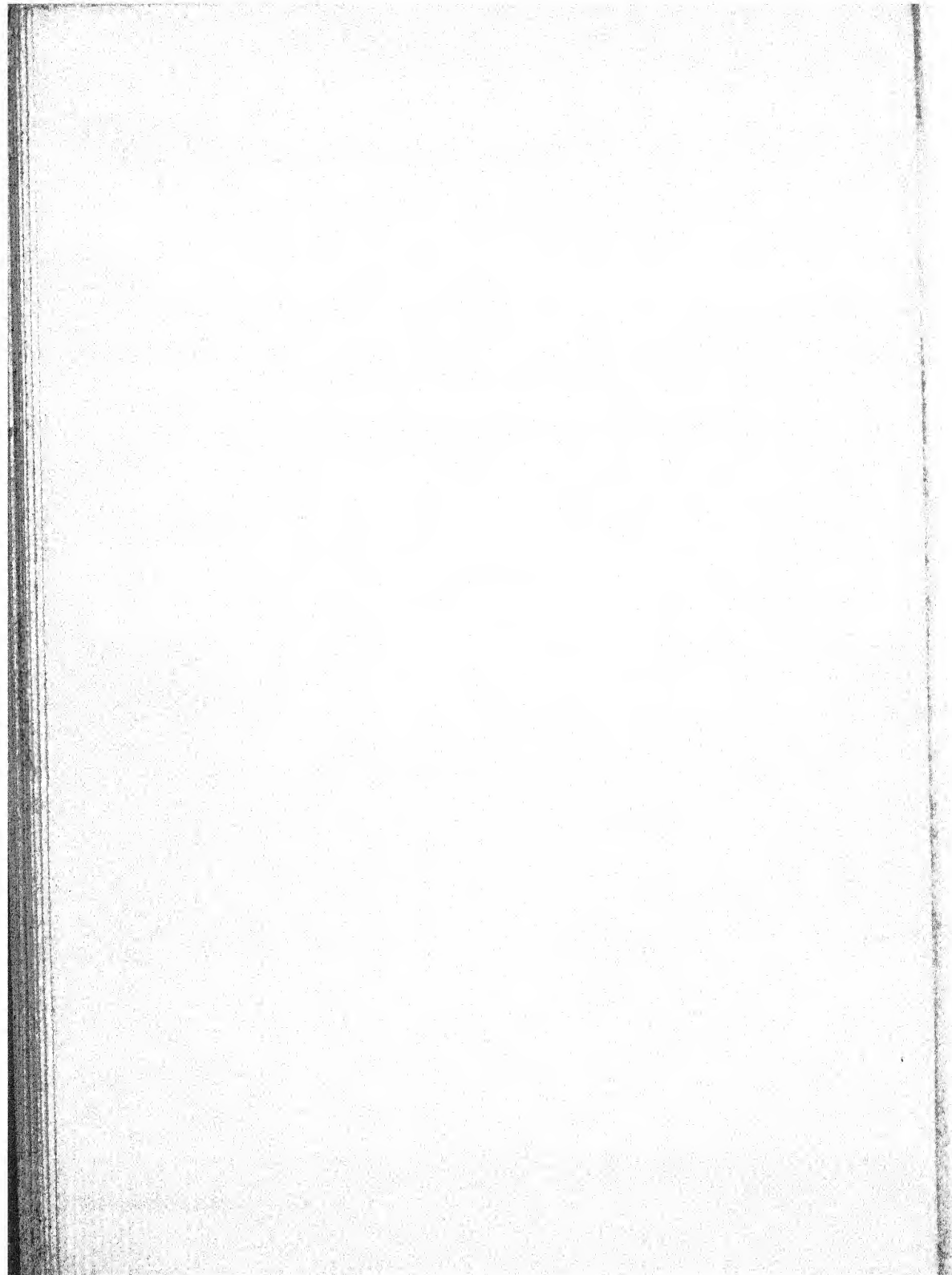
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**AMERICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD
CHRISTIANITY**

2



AMERICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CHRISTIANITY

2

I

NO one who has caught a glimpse of a world Christianity is thereafter ever quite the same. To many of us that vision came in the foreign missionary enterprise. The decisive experience in my own case occurred at the Nashville Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement, in 1906. I remember still how I was moved by the map of the world over the platform, and particularly by the words at the top of the map: "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the Kingdom." The keynote of that gathering, for me, was voiced by one of the speakers in the pronouncement, "The whole business of the whole church is to preach the whole gospel to the whole world."

Today we are being caught up into another phase of developing world Christianity. This phase is called the "Ecumenical Movement." The word "ecumenical" sounds like one of those five-dollar words that General Hugh Johnson talks about. But its meaning is quite clear when we recall that it comes from a Greek word that may be translated, "of the inhabited world." The great conferences of Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937, and at Madras in 1938; the Conference of Christian Youth at Amsterdam in 1939, and the formation of the World Council of Churches are all evidences of this movement. These conferences and the World Council are signs of a new age of Christianity. They are hopeful signs. In the opening sermon of the Oxford Conference, the Archbishop of Canterbury bade us rejoice in the fact that, in spite of all the gloom and reasons for pessimism, our generation is witnessing "the gathering tide of Christian union."

And now the various confessional and national groups have to think of the contribution they may make to a world Christianity,

aware of its universal character and its world responsibility. For of one thing we may be sure, the movement for world Christianity does not mean a denaturing of the contributions of the confessional and national groups; it does not mean a scaling down of historical achievements; it means rather the exposure of each confession, and the churches in each nation, to the challenging experience of re-valuing their life and faith by the truth of God as it is reflected from other confessions and other nations. Then let them move forward, as they are able, toward the church universal, as the kings of the earth toward the Holy City, bringing their glory and honor into it.

A symbol of the process by which the most fruitful union of the forces of Christianity may come into being was brought to my attention recently. I noticed in front of a store, as I was passing down a street, a whirling white disk. A little later, returning by the same street, I saw that the disk was now stationary. Moreover, it was no longer white; it consisted of the various colors of the spectrum. Walking on, I could not help but think that as all the colors of the spectrum are needed to produce white, so all the insights which have emerged in the experience of all the groups of Christ's followers are needed to produce the church which will be the more adequate embodiment of his spirit. Without depreciating the contribution of any group, all must find ways of working together about the axis of a common task.

From this point of view, let us inquire what contribution America may make to the movement of world Christianity. At the same time let us not shrink from acknowledging any problems that may have arisen incident to the development of our particular type of religious life.

II

Foremost among the contributions of America to world Christianity one would have to list the separation of church and state. Behind this achievement, which has meant so much to the freedom of religion in our land, and through the influence of example in other lands, lay the conviction of certain religious groups. The German church historian, Ernst Troeltsch, in tracing the development of religious toleration in Britain and America, says: "It was

only the Baptists, the Quakers, and Roger Williams, who maintained that from the spiritual point of view all religious denominations ought to receive equal recognition"¹ by the state.

In America this conviction was able to point the way for political policy because of particular conditions of American life. Here the philosophy of John Locke, with its emphasis on inalienable natural rights—which furnished the intellectual basis for the American Revolution—fostered a widespread belief in liberty of conscience. Here the divergent origin of such colonies as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, and Virginia had prevented the uniform establishment of churches of one dominant type. Most important of all, from the practical point of view, the heterogeneous religious composition of the colonies made the separation of church and state good politics. The result was the adoption, in 1791, of the First Amendment to the Constitution, which forbids Congress to make any law "respecting an establishment of religion, or forbidding the free exercise thereof," followed during the next third of a century by the disestablishment of those churches which had hitherto occupied a preferred position in relation to civil government.

The values of this development have been manifold. Spontaneity of religious life has been encouraged. New groups and new societies which cut across old groups have easily come into being. The churches have been free from state interference in their internal affairs. On the other hand, the churches have been free to criticize economic and political conditions on moral grounds, and their members have been able to express their convictions in political matters without compromising the independence of their religious associations.

We are beginning to see, however, that this great achievement has created new problems as surely as it has solved old ones. The exclusion of all religious teaching from the public schools has resulted in the growing up of millions of young people who are almost disinherited, so far as specific religious instruction is concerned. Perhaps even more important, this exclusion has implied that one may have an adequate education and be absolutely ignorant of religion and the value of religious faith. The conduct of public education without religious instruction tends to obscure the religious nature of man to which we have already referred.

But the gains which accrue from the separation of church and state outweigh the losses, and the tragic situation of the churches in totalitarian states today enables us to appreciate those gains more than ever. The religious forces of the nation have been set free to attack these problems which we have mentioned, as well as many others. The Catholic program of parochial education and the weekday religious schools in many communities illustrate different ways in which the issue of popular religious instruction may be approached. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that opportunities for appreciating important elements of the religious tradition may be introduced into the public schools themselves.

Meanwhile, the state, though separate from the church and impartial in its dealings with the various confessions, is friendly to organized religion. Various forms of co-operative effort in education, philanthropy, and charity between state and church exist in many communities. The fact of this co-operation was illustrated recently, in a rather unique way, in Rochester, N. Y. An exhibition of community service (religious and philanthropic) was set up in the Institute of the Brick Presbyterian Church, under the auspices of the Council of Church Women, a Protestant organization. But Catholics and Jews contributed various portions of the exhibit, and the city administration as well. During an afternoon at the Institute I kept saying to myself, "How ecumenical! How American!" Where else would one find a relationship between the religious forces of the community and the civil authorities that left religion so free, and that produced, also, the spirit of flexible co-operation between church and state?

III

Another characteristic of American Christianity that becomes unmistakable in world conferences is the urge which exists here toward civic and social reform. The primary source of this urge in the churches has been rightly conceived as the Calvinistic tradition.

Calvinism as a system of Christian thought and life takes its name from the Protestant reformer of the sixteenth century, John Calvin. On the theological side it is associated with such doctrines as the absolute sovereignty of God over the affairs of men and

nations, the predestination or election of believers to salvation, the irresistible nature of God's grace in its operation in the hearts of the "elect," and the persistence of believers in the Christian way after the grace of God has effected their conversion. The kind of life which grew out of such beliefs was primarily one of obedience to God's will as revealed in the Scriptures.

Calvinism as a life has probably never been portrayed more adequately than in the following lines of Charles Wesley (who differed from the Calvinists in theology, but retained much of their moral temper) :

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill—
Oh, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will!

In these lines one finds the Calvinistic conception of the chief end of man, "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever"; also the urgent sense of responsibility to God for serving the present age and for realizing to the full the Christian possibilities of one's "calling."

The task of the church according to Calvinists was to make available to men the message of the gospel essential to their eternal salvation, and to guide and discipline its own members that they might live in accord with God's will. The church, moreover, should admonish the civil authorities to provide conditions in society at large favorable to it and its mission. For the original Calvinists cherished the ideal of the Christian state, or Christian society, which they had taken over from the church of the Middle Ages. They believed in harmonious co-operation between the church and the civil order. The civil authorities, while independent, had the obligation to protect the true church against religious rivals, and to rule in accordance with Christian standards of public life. To protect the church and these standards the Calvinistic magistrates did not hesitate to use compulsion. One sees this original Calvinism motivating the New England theocracy, with its persecution of Quakers and Baptists.

(The main difference in ethical and social outlook between early Calvinism and Catholicism was that the Calvinists started out with the idea of the church as a "holy community." They had a stricter discipline for the laity, and a correspondingly higher standard for the morals of society in general. Following the same line, the main difference between Calvinism and Lutheranism was that the Calvinist churchman felt directly responsible for the morals of the state, while the Lutheran, centering his attention on inward religious experience, maintained a passive attitude toward the state which he regarded as relatively competent, under God, to deal with public morals "on its own.")

But why go back to this original Calvinistic tradition after the rise of the free churches, after the development of religious freedom, and after the disestablishment of all churches had shattered the dream of the union of church and state in America? We go back to it because in all the denominations deeply influenced by Calvinism—and they include the majority of American Protestants—the idea of the Christian state and of the responsibility of the churches for maintaining and perfecting the moral character of the state remains. So far as politics is concerned the churches can only persuade; and as a rule this persuasion is most wise when it is applied to broad issues of public morality rather than to specific party measures. Nevertheless, the churches have been able, to a considerable degree, to imbue their individual members with the conviction that the moral conditions of society are a part of their Christian responsibility. In the struggle for American independence, in the struggles against slavery and for temperance, and in the peace movement of recent times, churchmen in politics have made the point that evil social situations are inconsistent with Christianity.

The Calvinistic influence is, of course, only one of the factors which have produced in American Christianity the concern for social improvement. The contribution of the Quakers in this field has been notable. Catholics have been impelled by their own principles toward the achievement of the Christian state, and during the last generation the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI furnished fresh application of these principles to economic problems. Unitarians and other liberal Christian bodies have been motivated by the rationalistic humanitarianism, running back into

the eighteenth century, which has played such an important part in our political life. The sheer pressure of frontier conditions upon the churches has often forced them to take up the battle against turbulence and indecency. The socialist movement, moreover, has had many sympathizers in the churches, who have been a constant stimulus to their brethren.

But when all these influences have been appraised, I believe that the student of our national history will not be likely to deny the large and permanent effect of Calvinism in developing the urge toward civic and social reform. From the Pilgrim Fathers to Bryan and Wilson multitudes of ministers and laymen, traveling on the Calvinistic way, have been made to feel that the effort to create a Christian society was a part of their calling as Christians.

IV

There are certain other characteristics of American Christianity which it has to contribute to the world movement of the churches that may be mentioned together because they are closely related. (From this point on we are thinking particularly of Protestantism.) One is the prominence of the laity in the work of religion. In a recent letter in *The Christian Century*, Roger W. Babson, former moderator of the Congregational-Christian communion, says: "The Catholic church is essentially a hierarchy with priests, while the Protestant church is wholly a laymen's movement with ministers."² That statement may not be entirely correct as a description of ecclesiastical differences, but it is significant as a layman's impression of American Protestantism.

Even slight contact with organized religion in Europe will tend to underscore Mr. Babson's observation concerning the American church life he knows best. For in older lands an American is likely to be impressed by the preponderance of clerical influence. Here, on the other hand, a great number of religious organizations, such as the Sunday school associations, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.; the boards of hospitals and other philanthropies developed by the aid of churches; the community chests which provide the funds for these institutions, and the activities of the local churches themselves, all reveal the leadership of the laity.

Along with this lay influence, and closely related to it, one notes the practical-mindedness of American Christianity. We Americans tend to think of religious problems in terms of things to be done, rather than in terms of things to be thought out or contemplated. We hurry over the discussion of ends, to get at ways and means. We measure the achievements of our churches in statistics which record buildings erected, members received, and money raised. Continentals bemoan the fact that we are more interested in activities than in theology.

Doubtless, various factors have contributed to the growth of this trait. According to Dr. Charles A. Beard, the sheer challenge of a continent to be explored and used, with abundant economic rewards for talent, has stimulated the development of a certain "materialism" in the American nature. The great variety of religious beliefs in our population has compelled us to seek unity among the religious forces in doing things together rather than in the effort to achieve a common creed. The humanitarian tradition, whether Calvinist, Quaker, or rationalist, has made us sensitive to human needs. And finally, the relative prosperity of America during the last century, as compared with most other nations, has placed in the hands of Christian laymen money to spend "to the greater glory of God." This money, in accord with our practical and material interests, has not been spent, as in the Middle Ages, for the salvation of the donor's soul, for financing Crusades, or founding monasteries, but for the community values to be derived from hospitals, schools, and philanthropies.

One other quality of American Christianity we would mention, the capacity for voluntary association and co-operation. De Tocqueville, the great French observer of American life, was aware of that capacity among our people a hundred years ago. He wrote then: "Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions, constantly form associations. The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; they found in this manner hospitals, prisons, and schools. The Americans form associations for the smallest undertakings. They seem to regard it as the only means they have of acting."³

Various influences have contributed to the development of this capacity in the American character. The Calvinistic urge toward reform, the absence of a feudal structure which would have hindered the formation of free associations, the limitations set on the powers of government, state and federal, which divorced it from responsibility for many community activities—all helped to create the trend which de Tocqueville observed.

The most important reason for the development of this capacity, however, Professor Frederick Jackson Turner ascribes to the continued influence of the frontier. The early colonists, being a long way from the restraining hand of government in the mother land, had the opportunity to try out their own powers of spontaneous organization. The backwoodsmen, being a long way from Washington, had a similar opportunity. In both instances all sorts of associations under local leaders came into existence. "It is well to emphasize this American trait," quotes Professor Turner, "because in a modified way it has come to be one of the most characteristic and important features of the United States of today. America does, through informal association and undertakings on the part of the people, many of the things which in the Old World are and can be done only by governmental intervention and compulsion."⁴

In the case of the churches this trend toward voluntary associations is illustrated in the multiplication of religious sects, in the promotion of groups within the local church for specific purposes, in the organization of associations for religious education and missionary work, in the federation of churches—local, state, and national—and in the participation of Americans in the international conferences and in the movement for a World Council of Churches.

Still more significant is the fact that the voluntary association has furnished a means by which the idealism developed within the churches might find expression in the community at large. If the urge for social improvement within American Christianity owes its origin to Calvinism and early Quaker and humanitarian philosophy, it owes its continuance to the fact that through the voluntary association it could express itself without a constant struggle for political power. Countless philanthropies could be fostered which did not require governmental sanction. Movements

⁴ Used by permission of the Minnesota Historical Society.

for political reform could live and educate the public for decades before the time for overt political action was ripe.

The contribution of the churches to our civilization through these channels is far greater than we are sometimes aware. A few years ago President A. C. Marts, of Bucknell University, gave a commencement address on the theme, "The Greatest Agency in American Life." Many of his hearers supposed that he was going to discuss the school or the college. Instead, the address was devoted to the church. And President Marts described the church as the greatest agency in American life because, after a long and varied career in raising funds for educational and philanthropic enterprises, he had come to realize that the church was the seed-bed from which many of these enterprises sprang. Some of them continue permanently on a voluntary basis; others, such as elementary and higher education, have been taken over by the state.

V

But no historic process such as that in which American Christianity has been involved for three centuries ever works out in terms of achievement alone. It results in problems as well as promises.

We have already pointed out some of the problems which have arisen from the separation of church and state. The urge toward reform presents us with similar problems. The more important issues of public morals and social ethics now center in the economic and political field, and the complexities which surround them, and the technical considerations which they involve are so numerous that the solutions seem deeply confused. How often we have been reminded of Herbert Spencer's remark about political reform, that it is like pushing a dent out of a tin pan so that it reappears somewhere else.

Moreover, the main trend of reform in the economic and political field today is toward diminishing the privileges and power of the business class, which furnishes financial strength and lay leadership to the churches. The pressure within the local church for it to abandon the sphere of social morality, when these issues become acute, is likely to be strong. Thus the prominence of the

laity in the management of our Protestant churches has its disadvantages when the position of the laity is under attack. The Catholic church, being more deeply rooted in the city working class, from which many efforts for economic and political change are likely to spring, and being clerically controlled, has a greater freedom of action in dealing with some of these problems.

It is the writer's conviction, however, after spending more than twenty years in the pastorate of two churches composed largely of the families of businessmen, that most Protestant pastors in such churches have a fairly adequate amount of freedom in dealing with social problems. The weakness of Protestantism in approaching these problems, particularly in the economic field, is that it does not give sufficient help to its ministers in becoming intelligent concerning them; and in such help as it does give it does not use the resources of its laity. It is not a mark of intelligence to proclaim panaceas. Panaceas are not made respectable intellectually or morally by being dressed up in pious phrases.

I shall not forget, in this connection, an exclamation in an address by Studdert-Kennedy which I once heard in London. The hearts of few men have ever been more torn by sympathy for human need. Yet in describing the neat solutions which he and his fellow-ministers had been proposing for various problems, he said, "Thank God, the people have been too stupid to believe us."

American Protestantism, in obeying its urge toward reforms, faces possible frustration in the embattled situation of its lay leaders on the economic and political front. But it will deal with this problem most hopefully, if it appreciates the tolerance of many of its laity as well as the difficulties of their position.

We must confess, also, as American Protestants, that our practical-mindedness while an asset when there is general agreement as to the great ends of life becomes a liability when those ends are in dispute. And the great ends of life are in dispute again today. As a people we are entering once more on an era of discussion such as prevailed in the decades before the War of 1861-1865 and in the years before the Revolution. That discussion centers now as then on the question, What kind of a society do we want on this continent? There are those who would like to return as nearly as possible to the economic society of William McKinley,

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and there are those to whom the New Deal is only the overture to a symphony of collectivism, to be played under the baton of a super director. The more strident voices are telling us that the only choice we have left is that between Communism and Fascism. In any case, we have come to a time when thought concerning our goals is again the "first order of business."

We are urged toward such thought today by another consideration. In the America of the past the margin of error was so wide and the opportunities for recovery from error so manifold that action without thought was not particularly dangerous. But today, with the disappearance of relatively free and untapped natural resources, with the shrinkage of all distances, with the growing interdependence of the nations, and with the application of science to human destruction in a wholesale fashion, the margin of tolerable error has grown narrower.

In such a time it is obvious that we are called to the most profound thinking as well as the most fearless action of which we are capable. It is an argument for such thought that Gilbert K. Chesterton makes in his story about the lamppost. He pictures a crowd gathered around a lamppost eager to tear it down. A monk, apparently a scholar out of the Middle Ages, requests them to stop and consider first the question of the value of light. But the crowd is impatient with the idea of any such impractical discussion; it hustles the monk out of the way, and in a moment the lamppost is down. Now that it is down, however, the various members of the crowd discover that they wanted it down for quite different reasons. Some wanted the light; some, the old iron; some wanted a cheaper lamppost, and others a better one, while some wanted no lamppost at all. They wanted darkness because their deeds were evil. So they are compelled finally to come back to the question of the monk—the philosophical question of the value of light. Only now they have to discuss it in the dark instead of in the light.⁵

Already there are signs on the horizon of American life that the moral of Chesterton's story, the danger of action without thought, is being realized. In business the tremendous growth of cost-accounting and research is a sign of how people are beginning to "watch their step" in practical matters. The place of the man of thought in politics is taking on real importance—even if he is

still sneered at as a "brain truster." President Hutchins' plea for the study of the great books, and the present search in educational circles for a vision of the coming society for which students may be prepared, indicates a swing away from preoccupation with the *means* of life to a new consideration of its *ends*.

In religion it is noticeable that more of the ablest leaders, old and young, are interested now in theology, in the fundamental philosophy of Christianity, than have been thus interested for at least a generation. Mere institution building has lost its zest. We have discovered that the proliferation of financial and membership statistics may mean only the gathering of multitudes bound by the most casual ties and going nowhere in particular. The emphasis is shifting in the churches toward the development of instructed Christians, veterans who can hold the Christian line even when crowds of stragglers are pouring by them toward the rear. Until the Christian line is re-established by thought as well as action we shall probably not see a notable advance in the vitality of church life.

In the sphere of voluntary associations in which American Christianity has been particularly creative, problems are also appearing. It has become increasingly doubtful whether progress simply through the consent of voluntary groups is going to carry us far enough. It is doubtful whether business will police itself, whether labor organizations will control sufficiently the demands of their members, whether the medical profession will give us an adequate national health policy, whether the lawyers will reform our judicial system. Are we to believe that the Protestant churches, with their system of popular self-government, will make voluntarily the adjustments which larger service requires? The plain fact is that, as a method of dealing with many of our problems, the voluntary principle itself—one of the most thoroughly American features of our civilization—is now on trial. For in a society as interdependent as ours has become, the compulsion of government will be diminished only in the proportion that individuals and voluntary groups, bound together by self-interest, discipline their desires and assume a greater measure of responsibility toward society at large.

So far as the churches are concerned, whether we are thinking of consolidations, revisions in policy, the development of adequate

research and education, or similar needs, the most serious problem is probably that of time. Most of us believe that the voluntary principle as it is at work within Protestantism will carry us far if we have time for adjustments within and among denominations. But here we have to face the inevitable difference between the rates at which those most sensitive to needed changes and the rank and file are ready to move. Gaius Glenn Atkins has given us a useful picture of the difference between these rates of movement in his recent volume, *Resources for Living*. He says that "life is much like a four-lane road whose traffic is carried in separate lanes." On the outside lane travel the dreamers or idealists. On the next, the thinkers who try to combine the vision of the idealist with the stubborn facts of life in some philosophy or plan. Still closer in, on the next lane, are the organizers and executives who have the responsibility of putting plans and persons together in such a way as to get things done. On the fourth lane are the mass of people furnishing "the slowest and densest traffic of all." But "nothing ever becomes real until it gets going on this fourth lane . . . the highway of our common humanity."⁶

In this picture drawn by Dr. Atkins the problem of organizing American Protestantism for its task is epitomized. It centers in the differences in the rate at which people move toward desirable changes. In the religious field we may surmise that widespread adult education will help to narrow the gaps between those traveling in different lanes toward common goals. A deepening of religious life will help still more; and associated with such a deepening will be crises in our civilization at large. Then, as often before, we may see accomplished by the many in a brief period what the few have labored for through generations.

One other weakness in our American Christianity becomes apparent as the tides of war swirl about us, and as our people react to the conflict into which our fellow-Christians abroad have been drawn. Our geographical isolation, providing for us an extraordinary security against military attack in a world where such security is rare, is developing in some a false sense of superiority to the Christians of other lands. We are in danger of saying, in an amended version of Deuteronomy 8:17, "My power and my character hath gotten me this security." When, from this

protected position, we go on to present all sorts of paper solutions for the problems of other nations, we must not complain if they are coldly received. It was in respect to such presentations that a fellow-Christian from one of the warring countries quoted to me these lines:

The toad beneath the harrow knows
Exactly where each tooth-point goes.
The butterfly upon the road
Preaches philosophy to that toad.

The fact is, what is needed on the part of America in relation to this dreadful situation of international anarchy is not primarily the philanthropic impulse, but the attitude which seeks to comprehend and to co-operate in situations that are vastly different from our own.

This is particularly important now because of the peculiar position in which America will stand at the close of the present world catastrophe. Whether we shall be drawn into the war or not, American Christianity will be the greatest single reservoir of moral and material help open to the stricken Christian churches of the old world. There will be the task of rehabilitating Protestant Christianity upon the European continent. The necessity will probably be upon us of taking over a large share of British foreign missions. If Japan succeeds in the conquest of China, the limitations upon the American Christian enterprise in both China and Japan will be severe, and the entire issue of what kind of Christianity can be taught in mission lands under totalitarian rule will become urgent.

The difficulties connected with these new problems will be so great that the problems cannot be attacked with any measure of success, unless we American Christians approach them confessing our share in the responsibility for their creation. There will be no ecumenical movement to which we may contribute, unless each of us is able to meet his fellow-Christian from the nation at war with this prayer upon his own lips as it is on the lips of his foreign brother, "God be merciful to me a sinner." How slow we have been as American Christians to realize that we are all bound up in the bundle of life with other peoples so that what happens to them and to their freedom affects not only our work abroad but the very nature of Christian fellowship across national boundaries.

VI

We have been thinking of the contribution of our American experience to the world Christian movement of our time, and we have set that experience against the background of some of the problems which it has brought with it.

We have tried not to overweight that experience on the side of optimism, and have sought as much detachment as is possible for an American who lives within the fold of the church. Now at the end of this survey, we would not conceal the actual hopefulness we feel as we think of the possibilities of American Christianity. Some of our weaknesses are due to immaturity. Deeper thought, trials, and sufferings are likely to remedy them. Meanwhile, the American churches enjoy a precious freedom, they possess organizing capacity, they have resources in leadership and wealth. Many of them, in spite of the reverses of these latter years, maintain a persistent forward-looking spirit. They are capable of great things.

Looking back over our history and taking account of our failures as well as our successes, it does not seem that as Americans we should lose heart as we contemplate the tasks before us, great as they are. Sometimes a needed stimulus to our national faith comes to us from unexpected sources. Anne O'Hare McCormick brought us such a stimulus a little while ago from an interview which she had with an old Roman gentleman, on the day that Hitler entered Austria. He said: "This is the way Europe acts, by the easy way of *force majeure*. We call ourselves the center of civilization and we have had great moments, but we cannot face facts. . . . For centuries there has never been so little sense of the community of Europe as there is today. I am amused when I hear Europeans talk of how easy and simple your problems are compared to ours. The truth is that you have done everything we have failed to do; you have made a United States of Europe; you have taken our serfs and made them free, our poorest and made them rich, our most irreconcilable strains and given them peace. Using the same seamy stuff we all employ, and starting from scratch, no country has gone so far to remake the world."

The old Roman in his hour of pessimism seems to have been

hardly fair to those who have had to wrestle with the difficulties of his own world. But one does not have to believe all that he said about America to be confirmed in the conviction that something has happened in this country that is important for the future of mankind.

In like manner one may be convinced that something has happened here that is important for the future of Christianity. I have tried to imagine what a Hebrew prophet, with his strong sense of the working of God in human history, would say if he had the opportunity to contemplate the development of Christianity upon this continent. Is it not conceivable that he might say something like this?

"Yes, in America Christianity had a fresh start. To this virgin soil came representatives of vigorous European peoples, most of them for the purpose of securing a fresh start for themselves. Here they were without the handicaps that had prevented the growth of a real continental community in Europe. They had left behind them the curse of feudalism, with its caste structure; the curse of confessional strife which for generations had poisoned the relations of Protestants and Catholics; the curse of militarism, which had sown everywhere the dragon's teeth of insecurity and hate. Here at last the church had an opportunity to develop without either dependence on the state or persecution by it. The result has been the growth of a remarkable diversity in religion, along with a steady increase in the co-operation of religious groups.

"Your task in America now is to realize that you live on a new frontier. The old geographical frontier, to whose influence you owe some of your most interesting qualities, has gone. The new social and spiritual frontier has arrived, and the same zest for pioneering, for risk-taking, for adventure, so essential on the frontier of the great open spaces, is now needed on the frontier of the mind and the soul."

If the prophet of our fantasy should tell us this, he would be saying only what he often said to his own people of the ancient time, that they should be encouraged by their past to accept the tasks of their future.

As I think of our American Protestantism today, it seems like a ship, tossed about on a sea of confusion, laden with those

who seek, even as their Pilgrim forebears, a landing place where they may begin in confidence to build the structure of a better world. When such thoughts come to me I am reminded of the lights at the entrance of the channel to Charlotte Harbor at Rochester, N. Y. There is a light on each side of the channel; one is steady, the other intermittent. Ships out in Lake Ontario know that as they enter they must steer for the space between the lights.

The steady light reminds one of the enduring Christian faith; the intermittent one of the experience of our American Christianity, with its successes and failures. It is by heeding the message of both lights that we shall find our way into a harbor of promise for the days to come.

American Protestantism has an obligation to the world. Its Christian faith has come out of the great religious tradition that was fostered by other lands before it was carried to these shores. But it also has an obligation to the democratic way of life in this country, under whose influence some of its most significant qualities have been developed. That way of life is now engaged in a struggle for existence. Can we Protestants remain mere spectators of that struggle? If not, we must try to define more specifically our obligation to democracy.

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CHAPTER II

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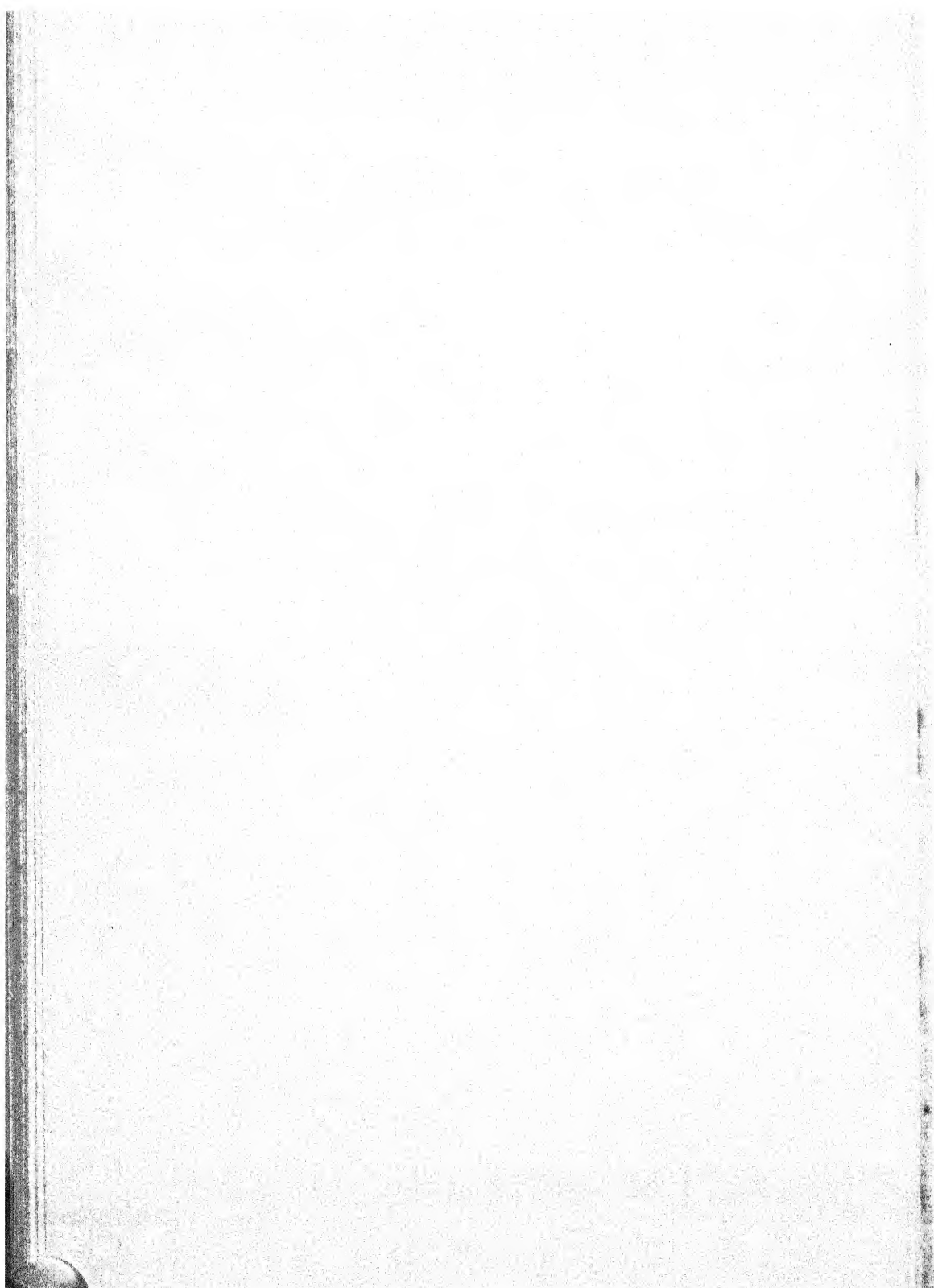
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PROTESTANTISM AND DEMOCRACY

3



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3

I

TO every generation its issue. Sometimes when the fog of events around us becomes too thick we may rise above the fog by going back along the path of history to points where we can see what other generations have had to face. For instance, one hundred years ago (1840), in America, the people of the churches were girding themselves for the great struggle with Negro slavery. Two hundred years ago (1740), in England, the Wesleys were entering upon their task of evangelizing the masses to whom the fruits of the Reformation had never really come. Three hundred years ago (1640) the life and death struggle of the Thirty Years' War, in which the survival of Protestantism was at stake, was still going on in central Europe, and the English were beginning a conflict with their monarch over the divine right of kings. Four hundred years takes us back to the Reformation itself (1540) and to the question whether nations and individuals could secure their freedom from an overshadowing ecclesiastical power, which seemed to thwart both political and religious growth.

Today, so far as our American public life is concerned, there is no doubt as to the central issue of this generation. It is the question whether we shall use successfully the democratic framework of ideas and methods, built up through the labor of centuries, for the solution of our problems, or shall be induced to cast it aside in a despairing appeal to some dictator to save us.

The importance of this issue for ourselves and our children is heightened when we recall the sequence of events in the case of some of the other issues we have mentioned. If one generation meets its issue squarely, then it sets the stage for another generation to deal effectively with other issues. If a generation evades its problem, then it accumulates moral deficits which have to be paid by those who come after it. Because the generation of 1540



fought out the issue of freedom from the control of a great ecclesiastical power, the generation of 1640, in England, was able to transmute that struggle into one for political freedom. Because, in America, the generations before 1860 had failed to deal with the slavery issue, it had to be dealt with, finally, in the most regrettable way. In 1784, for instance, Jefferson's plea for the abolition of slavery after 1800 failed by a single vote in the Congressional committee of which he was chairman. Commenting on that vote years afterwards, he said: "The voice of a single individual would have prevented this abominable crime from spreading itself over the new country. Thus we see the fate of millions hanging on the tongue of one man, and Heaven was silent in that awful moment."¹ The one-vote defeat of 1784 was duplicated several times, in other circumstances, before the final tragedy of 1861. But that tragedy apparently had to come as a reminder that what men sow in evasion and self-interest they will reap in desolation.

Here in the western world we face now, as we have suggested, the issue of the permanence of democracy. From the Rhine straight across Europe and Asia to the Pacific ocean, democracy, in any sense in which Anglo-Saxons can recognize it, does not exist. We except, of course, such small democracies as those of Sweden and Switzerland. In the case of the recently conquered nations of northern and western Europe and in Great Britain (still unconquered at this writing) the processes of democracy are either totally suppressed or severely limited. Here in America we suffer, in part, from the menace of totalitarian aggression. The more serious threat to our democracy, however, is to be found in our continuous bewilderment in the presence of our social problems. If by governing themselves our people cannot obtain in adequate measure the means of individual and social well-being, they will probably listen more and more wistfully to those who will promise them abundance in return for the surrender of their democratic birthright.

For the churches, and particularly for Protestant churches, this issue of the permanence of democracy is serious; a fact that becomes clear as soon as we ask what democracy means. To a provisional description of democracy, accordingly, let us now turn our attention.

II

There is probably no better way to begin than to ask what democracy has meant to those who have believed in it most strongly. Here we should have to put down some of the great historical answers to this question. We should have to say that it meant the "liberty, equality, fraternity" of the French Revolution; the "unalienable rights" and the "governments . . . deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed" of the Declaration of Independence; the "government of the people, by the people, for the people" of Lincoln's Gettysburg address.

Certain contemporary statements may also help us to interpret the essentials of democracy. Here is one by Archibald MacLeish: "We mean by democracy a society in which the dignity of man is of first importance, a society in which everything else must be subject to, and must support, the dignity of man."² The main thought of MacLeish's statement appears in one by Alvin Johnson, dean of the New School of Social Research, who describes "liberalism" in terms that seem to carry much of the meaning of democracy:

"The kernel of liberalism is the assertion of the inherent worth of the human individual; his right to the maximum practicable share in the control of his own destiny; the collective duty to protect the individual in this right, by whatever methods and devices the times may require."³ John Dewey expresses his opinion by saying: "If democracy has a moral and ideal meaning, it is that a social return be demanded from all and that opportunity for development of distinctive capacities be afforded all."⁴

Finally, we submit an interpretation by Professor L. T. Hobhouse, distinguished liberal scholar of England: "Democracy is not founded merely on the right or the private interest of the individual. This is only one side of the shield. It is founded equally on the function of the individual as a member of the community. It founds the common good upon the common will, in forming which it bids every grown-up, intelligent person to take part. . . . It assumes that the individuals whom it would enfranchise can enter into the common life and contribute to the formation of a common decision by a genuine interest in public

transactions. Where and in so far as this assumption definitely fails, there is no case for democracy."⁵

One cannot review such a series of statements without realizing the truth of Jane Addams' assertion that democracy is a mystical term and that its doctrine "continually demands new formulations." It gets its meaning, age after age, from a great continuous movement of human life in which people have felt and tried to express, amid everchanging conditions, a sense of human worth, particularly the worth of the ordinary individual. (This faith in human worth is the moral basis for the historic demand for "equality.")

But man has been most aware of his worth when it has been threatened by the arbitrary will of others. At the heart of the democratic movement, accordingly, growing out of man's sense of worth, has been the struggle for liberty. I shall always be grateful that as a small boy I came across a book entitled *The Story of Liberty*, written for children by Charles Carleton Coffin. I have not seen a copy for years, but it produced in my mind an inextinguishable admiration for those individuals and groups who have shared in the quest for liberty, political and religious. As I have grown older I have come to realize how important in the development of democracy that quest has been.

We shall think more clearly about liberty if we make the word plural, and say, "liberties." For liberty, historically, is an abstraction which covers a number of specific liberties for which men have struggled. There is civil liberty, the right to be governed by laws and not by the mere will of rulers or the police—the right which Coke voiced in his famous utterance against the pretensions of King James I, "the King ought not to be under any man, but under God and the law." There is political liberty, the right to participate in the making of the laws, directly or through representatives. But one cannot make laws that will meet the needs of the people without free discussion, in which reasons for and against the proposed laws may be advanced. This requires liberty of thought and opinion, of speech and of the press. Such liberties imply also liberty of conscience and of worship. They belong to the realm of what may be called "personal liberty." One could go on and speak of liberty of occupation, liberty in using the

facilities of education, and economic liberty to trade and to hold property against arbitrary seizure.

The struggle of man for various liberties, down through history, often seems to me like the struggle of the people of Holland with the sea. Man has pushed back the angry waters of violence, despotic greed, and contempt for the weak. He has pushed back these evil forces in order that, behind certain liberties built strongly into law, he might develop his capacity for growth and happiness in an orderly society. Every once in a while the sea of barbarism against which he struggles becomes too strong for him. It rushes in again in a mighty flood, wiping out many of the gains of the past and filling the hearts of men with despair. And there are leaks through the dykes, which produce swamps inside these defences of liberty against which men have to be on their guard. But man struggling for liberty may take courage from the struggle of the Dutch against the sea. After every inundation they have returned to the building of dykes, and recently they have been using all the new devices of science to enlarge and protect their territory.*

There is another fundamental element in democracy which appears, explicitly or by implication, in all the statements we have quoted above. It is suggested by the word "fraternity" in the motto of the French Revolution. We would call it, as Professor Hobhouse does, the element of "community."

Given the primary faith in the worth of man, the element of individual "rights" and the element of "community" constitute the two poles of democracy as a system of life. In a democratic society the relation of these two elements is reciprocal. Each supports and is dependent upon the other. The rulers or leaders of the community are responsible to the people, and the government of the community has as one of its chief purposes the maintenance of the "rights" through which individual members realize their worth and express their will. Individuals, on the other hand, through the use of their rights, develop the distinctive qualities which enrich the common life; they interest themselves in public affairs, and participate in the measures which serve the common welfare. The more widespread this interest and participation, the stronger

* The last two paragraphs are taken, for substance, from an article by the author in *Religious Education*, February, 1939. Used by permission.

and more progressive the community. The dykes of Holland, referred to above, also illustrate this reciprocity of individual rights and community. The dykes are essential to the protection of individual farmers in the cultivation of their land. But the dykes themselves are a community achievement. No dykes, no farms; no farmers, no dykes.

Such seem to us to be the essentials of democracy. The progressive extension of the suffrage to all mature persons and the continuous enlargement of the opportunities for popular education are but expressions of that faith in man which has inspired the democratic movement. The protection of children from premature and weakening toil, of the poor from exploitation, of labor in bargaining through representatives of their own choosing are but extensions of the principle of "rights" to meet new conditions. The growth of governmental regulation of industry is an illustration of how the welfare of the community as a whole must take precedence over individual or group advantage.

An immense development of political forms has taken place in democratic society, and the ways and means of democracy differ from one country to another. The forms may change, in fact must change. Already the rise of the new despotisms has made us aware of many weaknesses in the structure and functioning of political democracy. The need of a stronger executive to act for the nation as a whole, the need of inculcating the central loyalties without which a democracy cannot protect itself against factional divisions, the need of overhauling the representative system as our problems have become too numerous and too complex to be solved by semi-popular discussion—all these needs have been burnt into the consciousness of the democratic peoples in letters of fire and blood. The years which lie before us will be years when under the pressure of totalitarian triumphs we shall be forced to make our democracy more efficient.

But we should not lose the forest in the trees. The real failure of democracy occurs only when the essentials are weakened. When there is loss of faith in the worth of man and the rights of men are ignored; when society is riven by class cleavages and the interest of the community as a whole is set aside for that of a faction, or when government becomes so greedy of power that it

makes itself the master of men and not their servant—then democracy indeed fails, and the individual human being becomes a subject and not a citizen.

Democracy is the most rewarding of all the great systems of human organization. But it is also the most difficult to achieve and maintain. Looking back over the long history of man and remembering the strength of his egoistic and predatory impulses, the wonder is that we have had so much democracy in the western world. But having had it, there can hardly be any mystery as to why the Protestant churches, particularly those most active in the early development of this country, regard it as essential to their well-being. For under the "rights" assured to men in a democracy they are able, in security, to practice their religion and to pursue their moral objectives. Take away these rights and they would become relatively helpless before the overwhelming power of the state.

How essential democracy is to Protestants of the "free church" type we may see from what has been happening in Germany since the passing of the Republic and the coming of the god-state of the Nazis. What this new state, which has subjected thousands of clergymen to arrest for conscience' sake, means to the kind of Protestants we have in mind, A. D. Lindsay, the present Master of Balliol College, Oxford, has suggested in the following statement: "If the Lutheran Church, which has always preached the other-worldliness of religion and submission to the powers that be, finds itself in trouble with this new kind of government, the English Free Churches must at once find themselves in irreconcilable antagonism to it, or give up all their distinctive life and their distinctive contribution to Christianity."^a

These words we would echo to the full in their application to America. The essentials of the democratic system are essential to the health of the Protestant churches. Does that not involve these churches now in responsibility for the sound health of our democracy?

We can answer that question more intelligently if we seek to determine what the responsibility is that these churches have already incurred for the development of modern democracy itself.

III

"Modern Democracy is the child of the Reformation, not of the Reformers." With this statement by C. P. Gooch, British historian of the development of democratic thought, competent opinion seems to agree. The religious revolt of the sixteenth century, with the emergence of Protestant doctrines, was followed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England, America, and France by the triumph of democratic doctrines on the field of politics. But neither Luther nor Calvin could have said, "I planned it that way."

The fact is, there were so many influences operating to produce both the religious and the political revolts, that it is difficult to list these influences in the order of their dominance. The Reformation, as we see it now, strengthened the national interest against that of the Papacy, the lay interest against the clerical, the interest of the middle class of merchants and tradesmen against the landed aristocracy, the influence of independent thought against tradition, and the spirit of enquiry, which brought special privileges before the bar of reason, against the spirit of acquiescence in the status quo. It is a natural inference that the forces which were strengthened by the Reformation had something to do with bringing it about. Just to enumerate some of these forces reveals the Reformation as a composite product.

The same may be said of the triumph of political democracy in Britain and America. Again a great complex of forces was at work; but by the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries it is fair to say the situation is a little clearer. The people who are going to profit by these democratic doctrines of the worth of the individual, the rights of man and popular control over the government of the community, have become more unmistakable. The members of religious minorities, who want freedom to practice their religion in their own way, are going to profit; and the businessmen, who want to conduct their business without interference by the state and who desire a political status that recognizes their economic power, also are going to profit. There are humanistic and national interests in the picture, and in each nation there are special conditions. There are philosophical contributions to

the democratic movement associated with such names as Locke, Harrington, and Montesquieu. But the triumph of modern democracy really begins to come into an intelligible perspective when we think of it as due primarily to the fact, that in the critical period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in western Europe and America, the forces of religious change and the self-interest of the business and trading class were working in an unconscious but nevertheless effective alliance.

The contribution of the Protestant churches to this triumph of democracy was both general and specific.

Among the general contributions we may note the influence of the Calvinistic or Puritan tradition. The Puritans developed in English society in the sixteenth century as a minority. During that and the following century various Puritan groups suffered bitter experiences of persecution. These persecutions made them suspicious of the state and favorable to the notion of limiting its power. Two of their cardinal doctrines, moreover, reinforced this attitude. First, they believed in the direct sovereignty of God over history as well as nature, and that the will of God should be embodied in public as well as private life. This made them examine governments by Biblical standards, and when they did so their critical attitude toward the state increased. Furthermore, they believed in original sin, and that even the converted could not escape the effects of their sinful nature. Sinful man, they found, was greedy of power, and too much power in the hands of sinful creatures could only work out for ill. Accordingly, they wanted to limit the power of rulers in all organizations, in church as well as state. Lord Bryce has made the suggestion that the Constitution of the United States, with its numerous limitations on the powers of government, was "the work of men who believed in original sin, and were resolved to leave open for transgressions no door which they could possibly shut."

Another general contribution of the Puritans to democracy came out of their struggle for a pure church. The early Puritans began that struggle within the established Church of England. As time went on many of them left the established church and became "dissenters" of various types, because they felt that they could not have a pure church if it were to be subject to interference

by the state. In that conviction, Quakers, Baptists, and many independents, all of whom owed much to the Puritan movement, were in agreement. The churchmen of colonial New England with all their interest in government did not want the civil authorities to meddle with the internal affairs of the church. Desiring their own right to be themselves, and to run their churches in their own way, the members of these groups became ultimately responsive to "the rights of man" idea as a basis for the state.

Confining ourselves to the American scene, we should mention, as a further general contribution of the Protestant churches to democracy, the great series of religious revivals from Jonathan Edwards to Charles G. Finney. In these revivals the churches with a Puritan heritage along with the Methodists were particularly active. These revivals deepened the inner life of the American people and made them sensitive to human need, so that many philanthropies and reforms took root in the soil of popular feeling stirred and made fertile by the forces of religion. The humanitarianism which grew out of the revivals brought down into the common life of the masses the abstract principles of human worth and human rights which the intellectuals had found in the writings of philosophers.

But the influence of the Protestant churches on the development of modern democracy was also specific. There was no belief among the Protestant churches more widespread than that of "the universal priesthood of believers." The accessibility of God to the plain man, and the sense of the religious competence of the plain man when he had been touched by the spirit of God were more prominent in the faith of the Quakers, Baptists, and Independents than in the more highly organized Protestant bodies, but the idea was everywhere. It pointed directly toward the democratic doctrine of "equality."

The right of individual enquiry into religious truth, even though it meant in the stricter churches no more than freedom to read the Bible and to declare one's interpretation at one's peril, pointed toward the rights and liberties which became an essential part of the democratic gospel.

Specific, also, in its influence on political life was the congregational form of church government. This type of church became a

training school in democratic faith and practice. Equality was there, and the right to speak and to be heard; while the sense of responsibility for the affairs of the community was there instilled into the humblest. The transference of these ideals and habits from church to state was direct. One sees that transference going on among the Pilgrims. The compact under which they organized their first government at Plymouth was signed by all the people including servants and sailors. "The Governor and Council were chosen by the votes of all, and were subject to the popular assembly composed of the male colonists of full age." Speaking of this event Gooch says, "the democratic Church had grown into a democratic State."³

It is true that the various religious ideas which have contributed to the democratic movement have been held by people of very reactionary political views. G. M. Trevelyan points out how democracy remained walled up within the Scottish kirk, without penetrating the surrounding culture, until the reform movement of 1832-1833. A. D. Lindsay says that an Italian exile once remarked to him, "On the Continent, if one is a democrat, one is anti-religious. There is no choice." One may recall also with what apathy Lord Shaftesbury's great humanitarian reforms were greeted by most of the churchmen in England a hundred years ago.

But on the whole, it seems to be a fact of history that in the seventeenth century in England, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in America, the ideas and experiences of various Protestant groups were so pertinent to the tasks of the political order that modern democracy, as we know it, came into existence with definite religious support. When the responsibility of various religious groups for the rise of American democracy is weighed, it is worth while to remember that in 1763, out of four million inhabitants in the American colonies there were only about 22,000 Roman Catholics, and in 1775, out of 3,228 churches in the colonies, only fifty-six were Roman Catholic. There were no Roman Catholic churches in New England, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, or Georgia.

Of the dependence of democratic principles upon this religious (and primarily Protestant) support Gooch says, "without the

fighting power which they derived from their patron and ally, they would have failed to make any progress in an age where the struggle of creed was the dominant factor of national life."¹⁰

IV

And now what is the responsibility of the Protestant churches, particularly of those whose history has been so intimately related to the rise of modern democracy, for maintaining and strengthening it?

One of their responsibilities, surely, is to keep intact its religious roots. The primary faith of democracy is a faith in the inherent worth of the individual. It is upon that faith that his "rights" to self-development and self-expression are based. Destroy that faith and he becomes a super-ape to be studied, a "hand" to be used, or a mere pawn in the great game of power.

But that faith is fundamentally a religious faith. No one has pointed this out with greater clarity than Walter Lippmann. In an article in the *Herald-Tribune* (December, 1938) he described the difference between the totalitarian faiths abroad and the faith of historic democracy. He said that the difference lay in the assumption of these new faiths, that man belonged to the state while the assumption of democracy was, "that man belonged to his Creator, and that since he was therefore an immortal soul he possessed inalienable rights as a person which no power on earth had the right to violate." Then he went on to say, "This is the forgotten foundation of democracy in the only sense in which democracy is truly valid, and of liberty in the only sense in which it can hope to endure. The liberties we talk about defending today were established by men who took their conception of man from the great central religious tradition of Western civilization, and the liberties we inherit can almost certainly not survive the abandonment of that tradition."¹¹

By the light of this truth one may see now how the work of the churches that is concerned with the underprivileged of the earth contributes ultimately to democracy. One may see, also, how inevitable it is that a church with such a faith should be the spokesman for the downmost man, for in serving him and

speaking for him, the church keeps alive its own faith, which is not a faith in any natural form or comeliness of human creatures but in the Eternal that is hidden in man's heart.

The churches may also serve the democratic community by reminding it of those higher standards and responsibilities that will save it from the corrosion and sin of pride. Pride was set by the medieval church at the head of its list of the deadliest sins. Certainly it is the sin that is most likely to destroy the state. For the state, being the one human organization invested with the power of force, is likely to glorify its distinction by seeking to increase that power. All power corrupts and it corrupts for one reason, because it is so conducive to pride.

Even before the outbreak of the present Second World War the ravages of pride amid the achievements of the Soviet Union were so evident as to arouse misgivings in the hearts of some of its warmest sympathizers. In the tenth anniversary number of the *Bulletin of the League of Fighting Godless* in Russia, one finds the following: "The Stakhanov movement [a movement for increasing industrial efficiency] must play an outstanding role in the overthrow of religion. It signifies a mighty increase in the power of man, who is conquering nature and breaking down all previously imposed standards. . . . It is evident that under the proletarian deliverance from religion the creation of conscious workers in a classless society can . . . proceed to tasks which man, fettered by religion, would never have dared to face. . . . Man can learn everything and conquer everything. There is no bulwark which Bolsheviks cannot take by storm."¹²

Part of that statement is just the natural exuberance of a revolutionary movement, but part of it is something else. It is that something else which Malcolm Cowley of *The New Republic* has in mind in a discussion of the Moscow trials of some years ago. Mr. Cowley has never failed to appreciate the achievements of the Soviets. But in his interpretation of the cases of such men as Yagoda (head of the OGPU), men who had been invested with vast power which they used to conspire against the state, he makes the following discerning observation:

"The decline of all these men was hastened by what seems to me an important weakness of Communism as a religion. . . .

Communism has developed its saints and its sacred texts. . . . But it has failed to develop the feeling of human limitations, the personal humility that distinguished the Christian ideal at its best. It has failed to give a warning against pride—in Christian theology the sin of the angels, for which Lucifer was cast out of heaven.”¹³

If we have only political resources, we of the democracies are just as subject to the sin of pride as Communists or Fascists. We can be saved from the degeneracy of a Yagoda as well as from the utopianism of the Fighting Godless—to which pride has given rise—only by recalling that man is not God, but a creature. In the presence of God, his Creator and Redeemer, he may see himself as he really is, with divine potentialities in his nature, but with imperfections which no creature can remove. In that presence he may become conscious of standards higher than any he has been able to embody, and which will keep him ever saying, with the apostle, “Not that I have already attained . . . but I press on.”

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boasting as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—Lest we forget!

Another responsibility the Protestant churches have for the maintenance for democracy grows out of their own character as small-scale democracies. Democracy on the grand political scale depends upon the preservation of the ideals and habits of democracy in the smaller units of society. For it is in these smaller units that the type of people is developed who can make large-scale democracy work.

It is now clear that democracy will not work with just any type of people. For instance, if a society is to be successful on democratic lines there must be in it a considerable number of persons who have initiative, who will do things on “their own,” who will meet the needs they see without being ordered to do so by the government. Only when there is enough initiative among the individual members of a society to achieve many benefits through voluntary means can the perils of the omniscient state be avoided.

It is obvious also that with the inevitable clash of human interests we cannot make a democratic society work unless people have the capacity to moderate their demands and to co-operate in adjusting them. Irreconcilable groups, whether composed of workers, businessmen, religious people, fanatics led by a demagogue, or those seeking special privileges, present grave problems for democracy. When they become too large they destroy the state, as in Germany they destroyed the Weimar Republic.

Still another quality needed in a democracy is the quality of moral imagination, the capacity to see things in terms of a larger whole than that represented by any organization of which we happen to be members. So important is this quality that Great Britain pays the leader of "His Majesty's opposition" that the party in power may be compelled constantly to face issues from a point of view which may not serve the party's interest.

If the churches are truly democratic in their own functioning, they may serve as training schools for the development of men and women who have the initiative, the self-restraint and the moral imagination that is necessary to make large-scale democracy a practicable system.

Finally the churches can be pioneering agencies, exploring the land of human fellowship, and working experimentally to extend the democratic way of life into new areas. Here the churches must often be critics of democracy as a going concern, and must be prepared to receive criticism on their own part. But there is no way of avoiding this situation. For lofty principles unapplied are likely to become only means of escape from the battle where the issues of life are decided. It is in the application of their principles that the churches must pay the price of their ignorance. There they must sometimes expose their diletantism and hypocrisy. There also they must incur the pain of suffering for being in the right, when their society thinks they are in the wrong. But this is all a part of any genuine incarnation, of any real process of redemption.

The fact is, that these activities, in which the churches seek to maintain and strengthen a democratic society, involve certain tensions between the churches and that society. But the most creative periods in church and state have been those when men

were conscious of a gap between what they were and what they ought to be. There is such a consciousness in America today. In every phase of life men feel that unless the tremendous increase in material power (economic and political) is paralleled by an increase in moral control, the outcome will be disaster. Without such control our civilization is like a high-powered automobile with no brakes and with a very unreliable steering gear. Every agency with any responsibility for the moral control to be exercised in our society feels a measure of the tension of which we are aware inside the churches. Our educational literature is full of it. What the ablest leaders of the press feel is well represented in a statement a few months ago by Henry R. Luce, publisher of *Fortune*, *Time*, and *Life*. In an address at Williamstown, Mass., he said that "the press must offer to the people of this country in the next few decades such an amount and such a quality of instruction in the facts and problems of public affairs as no people yet under the sun have been willing or able to receive. This will involve telling the people some very unpalatable facts. Without these facts the people cannot govern themselves in an industrial society."¹⁴ The existence of individuals, in the churches and in the nation at large, with a sense of responsibility Mr. Luce feels constitutes the great hope of American democracy.

V

We have tried to point out how essential democracy is to the existence of the Protestant churches, and how these churches themselves have helped to create the democracy under whose forms their institutions have flourished. Today democracy is again fighting for its life. If the leaders of the totalitarian states realize that they cannot secure the great changes they are seeking without an appeal to religious motives, why should we assume that democracy, with its roots in Protestant Christianity, can solve its problems without a similar appeal?

Nothing perhaps will awaken us to what we have at stake in democracy except some shock, some experience, when we see what it was our loss not to have seen earlier. What I have in mind is pictured for us in the last scene of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*.

The scene is laid in a cemetery on a windy hill outside a New England village. The dead are portrayed, in fantasy, as speaking to one another. A young woman, who has been a leading character in the drama, is brought in for burial. After her interment she is represented as conversing with the other occupants of the cemetery. She tells them that she wants to go back to the world she has just left. They advise her not to do so, but that if she must go, to select just an ordinary day of her previous life as the setting for her return. She accepts their advice and chooses a day out of her girlhood. When she arrives at her old home everything seems different from what it was when she was alive. Her mother is young and attractive. Her father walks in gaily, with a brisk step. The odor of the coffee is delicious. There is a glamour over every object. She is intoxicated with life, all the while being unseen by anyone. When she returns to the cemetery she tells her associates how wonderful it all was—and that she never knew it before. The reply is that mortals never know; they are so blind.

Well, there came to me such a moment a few years ago, when—as the young woman in the play saw at last the preciousness of life—I saw the value of democracy. It was in the home of a German professor to whom I had a note of introduction. He had been telling me some of the sources of the power of the Hitler régime under which he lived.

"One of those sources," he had just said, "is its efficient secret police."

"By the way," he went on, "what are you going to do with that notebook?"—the notebook in which I had been putting down statements from the interview.

"Oh," I replied, "I shall make some speeches, and perhaps write an article, based on its material."

"Is my name in the notebook?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered, "I put it down just now."

"Cut it out!" he said; and with that he handed me a pair of scissors across the desk.

"Cut it out. Do not scratch it out. They will read through the scratches when they look at your notes in your hotel room while you are out. I have friends in concentration camps now for saying a good deal less than I have said to you."

While I was cutting out his name, and the name of every other

German who had said anything to me in Germany, and was tearing the pieces of paper into minute bits for the professor's wastebasket, I had my moment of illumination. I saw what democracy means. I saw that it means the freedom which I had assumed so unconsciously in my previous life that I did not realize I owed my experience and outlook to it. Having once seen what freedom means, one cannot evade the responsibility for its preservation.

When the history of these years is written, it will probably be said that it was in America that democracy had its great chance. Here the representatives of the most virile European stocks came together, under favorable material conditions and under the influence of ideals which emphasized the worth of the individual and the equal rights of men to share in the processes of government. Here they found a continent stored with the resources necessary for the development of a great civilization, with a high standard of living for all. Here they were protected by two great oceans from the fear of invasion that hindered the full flowering of democracy in Europe.

What will the historians say was the fate of democracy in America? Are there any institutions that have a greater responsibility for the answer to that question than the churches of American Protestantism?

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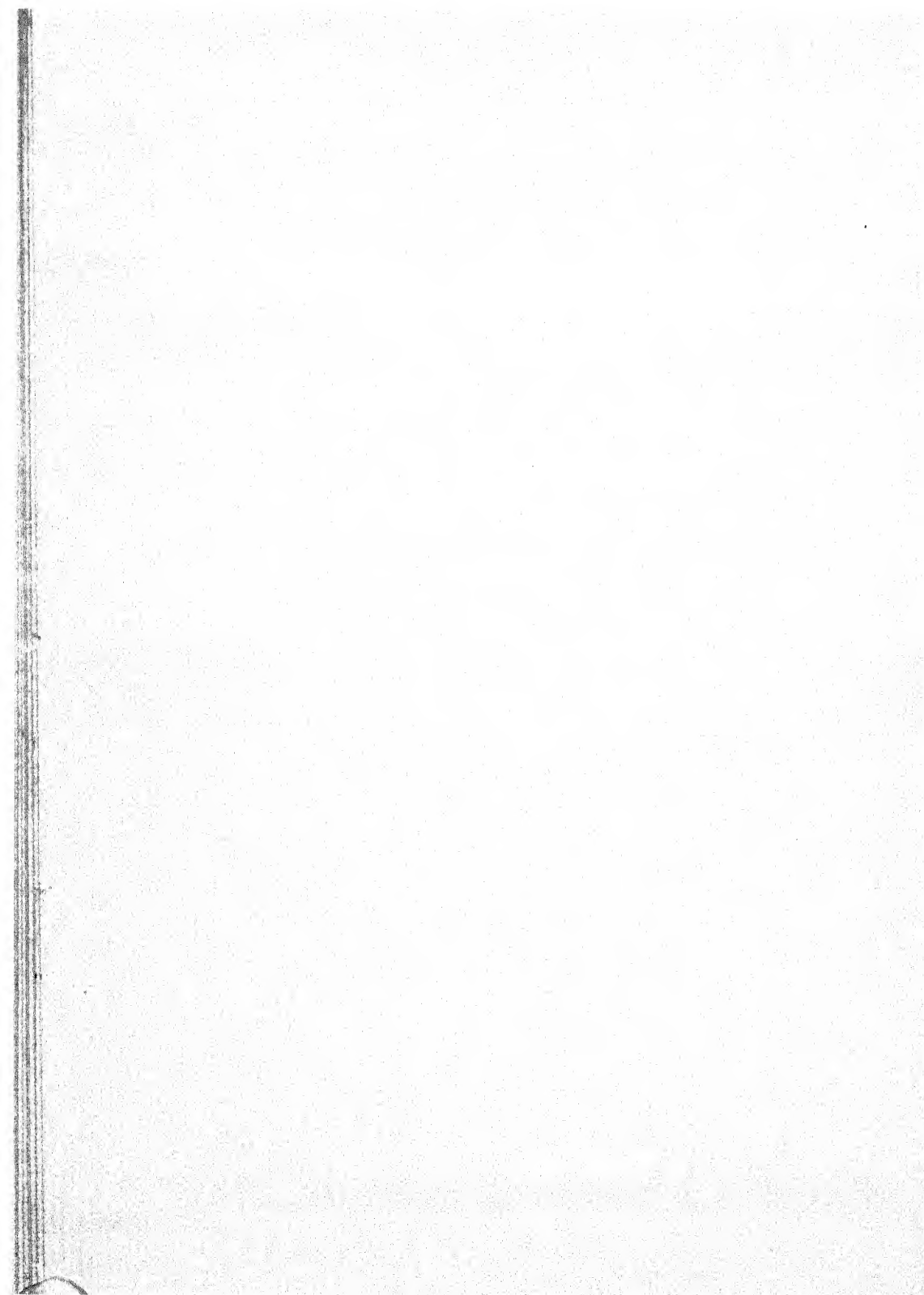
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THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

4



THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

4

THE first three chapters of this book have been concerned with an endeavor to understand the mutual relations of Christianity—particularly American Protestantism—and democracy. In the next three chapters we shall be asking what contributions our Christianity and our democracy may make to the solution of some of the issues which are before our generation.

One may come into the world of our time with principles which have been effective in other times in guiding men into the experience of larger life. But if these principles cannot furnish light and power now, they will be like an engine unconnected with the machinery it is supposed to operate. The most serious contemporary problem of both Christianity and democracy concerns their relevance to practical issues. Democracy has been put to one side over the greater part of Europe, because it was not adequate to meet the challenge of the post-war period. Christianity has suffered much the same fate. In one of the most searching books of the last five years, *The End of Economic Man*, Peter Drucker says that Christianity has failed in Europe largely because it has been unable to furnish decisive help in banishing the "demons" of unemployment, insecurity, and war. In other ages Christianity was successful in either banishing or explaining the demonic forces with which man struggled, but apparently it "cannot banish or rationalize the demons that beset our society and our times."¹ Because of the loss of confidence in the ability of democracy, capitalism, socialism, and Christianity to banish the "demons," the European masses turned to fascism—the rule of the hero who is political magician and sorcerer—in the hope that he will succeed where others have failed. The quest for social stability was transmuted into a sinister political messianism.

America is not Europe, but who will say that the demons which have frightened Europe are not on our horizon? Can

Christianity and democracy collaborate in banishing them? Let us turn first to those we have to meet in the economic arena.

I

Both Protestantism and democracy owe much of their influence to the economic progress made by those countries where they have become established. We have already pointed out how Protestantism and democracy developed in England in connection with the rise of the middle class in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The motives of Englishmen in becoming advocates of Protestantism and of representative government were not unaffected by economic considerations. The growing wealth of Holland, after it had thrown off the yoke of Spain and had adopted a policy of religious tolerance, was particularly impressive. "London and other towns of traders," according to Thomas Hobbes, "having in admiration the great prosperity of the Low Countries, after they had revolted from their monarch, were inclined to think the like change of government here would produce a like prosperity."² Why should we wonder at this? No great movement, such as Protestantism or democracy, could come to influence over numbers of people unless it seemed to open channels to larger life. And some of the most important of those channels will always run through the area where men make their living.

The significance of economic issues for religion has been steadily growing in the consciousness of Christians over the last seventy-five years. The rise of "Christian Socialism" in England in the mid-nineteenth century, the development of the "social gospel" in America in the early twentieth, the formation of the Christian trade unions in Germany, the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI dealing with the conditions of labor, and the great Oxford Conference of 1937, which brought together nearly all of the great non-Roman Christian communions of the world and which dealt in the most positive way with economic questions, all testify to the increasing concern of many Christians with these issues.

We are just beginning to realize that the people of the grass-roots feel this concern as well as those who have the opportunity

for a wider vision. Father Coughlin's audience grew immensely when he began to talk about religious economics. A recent study of the religious interests of young adults, made for a doctor's dissertation at Yale University, points out how the religious interest becomes permeated with economic concern as one drops down from the better-paid to the lower-paid workers.³

Yes, the condition which Peter Drucker found in Europe, masses of people wistful for religious or any other leadership that will help them overcome the economic demons which threaten their existence, is beginning to appear here.

II

In discussing the challenge which the economic situation presents to Christianity and democracy, the writer is obviously not writing as an expert in economic theory. He is in the same situation as a large majority of our people. Most businessmen, workers in factory, office, or store, ministers, teachers, doctors, and lawyers, indeed, most of the rank and file of our churches are laymen in economics. Nevertheless, in a democracy like ours the pivotal decisions are made by lay rather than professional economists. There are not enough experts to do the deciding, and the experts do not agree among themselves. In the end we lay economists select the experts we trust most fully. Moreover, if any great policies or reforms are to be adopted, we laity have to talk these things through among ourselves and come as far as possible to a common mind. That is why we are discussing "the economic crisis."

Now whatever a laymen's views may be, he is most real and honest when he starts from his own experience. As one tries to find out the nature of the demons which threaten us in the economic field, let one begin with certain pictures drawn from experiences in one's own life.

An experience from my boyhood, in the last decade of the nineteenth century is in point: My father was pastor of two churches in southeastern Ohio, one in the county-seat, the other in a small country village about ten miles away. Father used to take me with him on the week ends that he would spend at the village. The

people there were practically all farmers or those living by farm trade. The farms supplied the people with their food, and through trade at the village store, with their clothing and most of their household and farm equipment. Little cash was needed except for taxes and mortgage interest. The preacher was paid in part from farm produce. The main complaint of these farmers, in the nineties, was in respect to the prices they received for their crops. That was why many of them were for Bryan. They thought that "free silver" would raise farm prices. If prices sunk too low, the farmer might not be able to pay his taxes and interest, and so might lose his farm. But if he lost it he could rent another, or work for another farmer; or he could go west and take up new land. I recall how some young people went out from that community to Oklahoma when the "Rosebud" territory was opened up for settlement.

What impresses me now, as I look back on that life, is its self-contained, independent character. The people lived in their own community. A man who had been as far away as New York could gather a crowd around him, as he sat on the cracker-box in the village store, and tell of the "sights." There was little sense of "social distance" between the farmer who owned his farm and the good tenant, or the industrious worker on another man's farm. At church socials and community affairs everyone called everybody else by the first name. They were all one big family. There was only the slightest problem of relief for the poor. That relief was voluntary, and was forthcoming in every case of real need and in times of calamity.

Alongside that picture in my mind hangs another. It is that of the Brick Church Institute, in Rochester, during the years 1933-1935. The halls and rooms were full of young people, unable to find employment in private industry, who were participating in projects of recreational leadership under the WPA. Into my office as pastor, day after day, would come the older men—for the most part over fifty—who could not find work. As chairman of the Bureau for Homeless Men in the city I met many more of the same type. Something had happened to the employment of the young and the old; something drastic which continued year after year. One man would lose his life insurance, another his home, another

would try to commit suicide. I knew the worth of some of these men. The people in sheltered comfort kept saying, "Anyone can find work who wants it." Outside a small percentage of "unemployables," however, the men whom I met in my office and in the activities of the Bureau were not different as individuals from the men back in that country community of southeastern Ohio who always had work. In the main it was something outside of these men, an "impersonal something," which they could not reach that was the cause of their trouble.

An impression as to what this impersonal factor was came to me in an experience that constitutes another picture. It was at the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago, in the summer of 1933. I was watching the Chevrolet assembly line in the General Motors building, where workmen were putting together cars from parts that had been shipped in. While I was there the line stopped for an hour, because a certain part was missing. As the workers sat around waiting, the walls of the building seemed to drop away and the idling men in it took their places alongside millions of idle men across the country, who were unemployed, not for an hour, but for months and years. Were these millions unemployed because somewhere else there were missing parts? Had I not found in Chicago a clue to the difference between the old America, represented by a country community in southeastern Ohio in the late nineties of the last century, and the new America, represented by Rochester's army of the unemployed?

The clue lay in the fact that the old America was a world based on agriculture and trading, where people lived a relatively independent life, getting at least the means of subsistence out of the soil, and moving on to the great open spaces and a new chance when opportunity narrowed on the old home place. The new world was a world that had been made interdependent by technology and the machine, where the labor of millions had to mesh, as the cogs of a machine mesh, for them all to be employed. If the vast industrial mechanism failed to operate in balance, each part being synchronized with the other parts, then sooner or later would come a stoppage, or a slowing down of various parts, until on a level of less production, income, and employment the machine could get going again. These stoppages or "slow downs" constituted the

"crises" which had become characteristic of the large-scale economy of the Western world.

Moreover, the adjustment of individuals to these crises had now become more difficult, because the bulk of our population had moved from the country to the city. When our nation was founded the majority of the people were farmers, but according to the latest census of the gainfully employed, only about 12½ per cent were farmers and an additional 9 per cent farm laborers. Of this 9 per cent one-half were "members of the family working on the home farm."⁴ The rest of us depended largely on the smooth working of a vast process of exchanging goods and services for the means of subsistence which our farmers take from the soil.

A great economic mechanism of production and consumption, which had grown until it had drawn our people together in an interdependent order which must be kept in balance, that was the "impersonal something," determining unemployment and insecurity, that I saw on a day of 1933 in Chicago.

III

Now one cannot develop even a partial understanding of our economic life out of the few experiences of one person. All that we suggest is that these experiences may throw into relief a single problem of that life—the problem of balance. What causes these crises of balance that result in great unemployment—the demon which helped to create Hitler and which has become so formidable here in the United States? Can we understand these crises sufficiently to banish the demon?

The world had known economic prosperity and privation long before the rise of modern industry. In the agricultural and handicraft economy of the Middle Ages new supplies of gold, new trade, or unusual crops might produce an improvement in the standard of living. War, pestilence, and famine could leave their prostrating results. But "crises," the alternation of expanding and contracting phases of economic life, occurring with some regularity, "have appeared on the largest scale and with the widest effects during the period since the Industrial Revolution, and in the countries whose progress has been most rapid."⁵

The main reason for this fact is that modern economy, being characterized by machine production and the specialization of labor, has required more and more capital to provide the machines and finance their operation. The greater the accumulation of capital, the larger the scale of industry and the more interdependent its operation, the more disastrous are the miscalculations that occur. If the individual farmer or tradesman in a simple economy miscalculates, he suffers, but in our complex modern order errors in foresight are multiplied a thousandfold. For instance, according to Professor Taussig, of Harvard University, "many of the crises of the nineteenth century were closely associated with excessive or unprofitable railway building."⁶

Today, miscalculations on the part of those who are building factories, installing equipment, or piling up inventories for trade that does not materialize, or who are raising the prices of commodities so that the volume of trade is reduced—such miscalculations cause a stoppage of advanced buying, cancellation of orders, the laying off of men, and the cessation of investment. Thus a downward spiral of economic activity begins. One of the most disastrous forms of miscalculation is the overexpansion of credit, and the downward trend is frequently marked, at its inception, by some conspicuous financial failure. A great drought may stimulate the trend, or a government policy that frightens investors. A rise in costs which threatens profits may have a similar effect.

Once the spiral of decline is entered, readjustment is delayed and depression is deepened by what economists call the "rigid" elements in our modern economic structure. If, with the onset of the crisis, prices fell rapidly and smoothly to a level where a new balance of demand and supply could be effected, it would pass with a minimum of evil results, recovery would be rapid and business might be healthier for the periodic purging of its unsound elements. But many prices are not flexible. Taxes may grow instead of diminishing. Utility rates are lowered very slowly. The burden of interest charges remains. Wage rates supported by strong labor organizations are highly resistant. Giant corporations which control their market often deem it more profitable to shut down their plants and maintain their prices—paying fixed charges out of surplus—than to continue production at lower prices. The

harmful effects of these rigid elements are multiplied through the interdependence of our economy. Flexible prices, as of agricultural products and of unorganized labor, may drop so far that the basic consumers' market becomes seriously constricted. Then, not only does a vast amount of misery occur, but the capacity of our economy to attain a new balance of costs and prices, at which a large volume of goods can be exchanged, is endangered. This is why the peril of political revolution lurks within the modern "economic crisis."

How does the reversal of this process occur? In general, through the development of conditions which enable more and more people to do business with confidence in the future. Through failures, bankruptcies and refinancing much of the unsoundness is removed. A change in the political atmosphere, an upturn in foreign trade, a bumper crop, a government-stimulated program of construction—as in Britain or Sweden—may help. In America there have been, through the greater part of our history, three permanent factors contributing to revival. We have had new land to settle, and new resources to develop that have called for new investment and new building of all sorts. We have had the prospects of an increasing population, whose anticipated needs have spurred business to expand. We have also enjoyed the stimulus of new inventions. The railroad and the automobile, with accompanying investments and expenditures, have been largely responsible for entire periods of prosperity.

These are a few of the suggestions concerning the nature of periodic economic crises which appear in the literature of the subject. Of late years a great deal of emphasis has been laid on the ratio of the total savings in our society to new investments. When savings are not fully reinvested, so that they do not flow out in wages and the purchase of goods, but pile up in banks, then we have depression; for then a part of what the people have produced is not returned to the market-place to keep the process going. When investments exceed savings through the extension of credit then we have "booms." The English economist, John Maynard Keynes, has elaborated this theory, but forms of it may be found in the writings of John A. Hobson and Professor Alvin H. Hansen as well as in various publications of the Brookings Institution.

IV

We have been thinking of these crises thus far from the point of view of those who believe in an economy of free enterprise, in which the means of production are owned by private individuals, private corporations, or co-operatives. But we must face the fact that there is another interpretation, paralleling the above in part, but based on a different view of the whole process of history. I refer to the Marxian interpretation.

The followers of Karl Marx do not all agree among themselves, but in the main they think of the crises we have been discussing as the inevitable outcome of our existing economic system, which they call "capitalism." The root evil of capitalism, in their view, is that the laborer does not receive the full value of his toil, that a part of that value is kept back by the owner or capitalist in the form of profit. It is the quest for profit that makes the wheels of modern business go round. Already, when Marx and Engels published *The Communist Manifesto*, in 1848, it was evident that profits could be enlarged by organizing business into larger units. This involved the concentration of wealth in relatively fewer hands.

The accumulation of capital in modern business took the form of a fixed burden of debt, and the concentration of business in large-scale units tended to produce monopolies which could fix prices. These developments made adjustments to the changing conditions of the market slow and difficult. Hence the "crisis." As wealth is concentrated, as monopoly increases, and as the development of the older industrial nations slows down, capitalism is driven by the narrowing of profit margins to seek new markets, with larger profits, in backward countries. This is the stage of imperialism. Finally, the imperialistic nations go to war with one another for the privilege of exploiting the weaker peoples.

But this is not all. At the same time that wealth is being concentrated, the workers are being concentrated in one great body, the proletariat.* Laboring in large-scale industry, side by side, the workers gradually become conscious of their common interest and their power. When the power of the owning class has been

* From *proles*, the Latin for "child." A *proletarius* in ancient Rome was a citizen of the lowest class, without property, and regarded as capable of serving the state only by having children.

weakened by the "crises" and by war, the workers have the opportunity to seize control through social revolution. Marxists have insisted that social revolution is the inevitable outcome of capitalism, because no solution of the conflict between the owners and workers is conceivable short of the transfer of absolute power to the working masses. It is not likely the owners would consent to such a transfer voluntarily.

The contradiction of capitalism, according to the Marxists, is that the private ownership of the means of production and the pursuit of industry for profit lead on through the concentration of wealth, monopoly, crises, imperialism, and war to the death of capitalism itself in revolution. In their opinion there is only one cure for this inherent contradiction—the recapture of profit for the community at large through the ownership by the community of the means of production, and the operation of our entire economic plant and equipment through centralized planning, not for private gain but to meet human needs.

V

We have outlined the Marxian interpretation of the "crisis" and its setting in the economic system because, of all the philosophies challenging our existing order, it is the most persuasive and influential. It is the basis of all socialist and communist sects in all countries. Both Fascism and National Socialism owe much to it. If the Hitler-Stalin alliance continues, it is almost inevitable that Marxism will conquer Germany. Here we pause to note where Marxism seems to have been right, and where it seems to have been wrong as a prophecy of economic development in the modern world.

It has been right in its observation of the trend toward bigness, toward monopoly in industry. The studies of Berle and Means into the workings of the modern corporation confirm this observation. Current reports of the profits of small corporations as compared with larger ones tell us why this trend will continue. The National City Bank Letter for August, 1939, points out, for instance, that of the approximately 85,000 corporations reporting to the Treasury for the year 1936, the 43,000 plus, with assets under \$50,000 each, operated that year, on the average, at a loss.

Profits rose, on the average, as the size of the corporation increased. The highest percentage of profit in relation to receipts was obtained by the 134 giant corporations, with assets of more than \$50,000,000 each.

Marxism has been right in its observation of the trend toward the concentration of wealth. In all the great industrial nations that trend has been notable. America's "sixty families" are paralleled by France's "two hundred families." Gladstone used to indict the "Upper Ten Thousand," and Joseph Chamberlain, father of Neville Chamberlain, spoke of that class "who toil not neither do they spin, whose fortunes . . . have . . . grown and increased—while they slept—by levying an increased share on all that other men have done by toil and labor to add to the general welfare and prosperity of the country." How far that trend has gone in America was evidenced by the income tax report for 1929, which revealed that the thirty-six thousand families at the top of the income scale, with average incomes of \$75,000 each, received as large a share of the total national income as the approximately ten million families at the bottom.

The Marxists have been right, also, in their observation that crises are to some extent inherent in an unplanned, interdependent economy such as ours. Others, not Marxists, have noted the same thing. According to Professor Taussig, whom we quoted above, "oscillations of industry must be accepted as inevitable concomitants of the régime of private property. . . . No doubt they are among the black features of the existing system."⁸ Professor Slichter, also of Harvard University, is so impressed by the precarious nature of the balance in our present system that he is led to question "whether capitalism is worth keeping," whether it would not "be sensible to shift to a simpler economic system such as socialism."⁹

And the Marxists have been right in their detection of the economic factor in the development of modern imperialism and war. Undoubtedly they have simplified matters more than the facts warrant; but the Neutrality Law of the United States—in provisions that have since been removed which forbade us to sell guns to belligerents on the tacit assumption that our boys are likely to follow the guns abroad—has evidenced the widespread belief in a connection between war and motives of economic gain.

But the Marxists have also been wrong. They have been wrong about the people being driven down increasingly into the lowest economic group of workers. Just the opposite trend has been evident in the oldest capitalist country, England, on whose development much of Marx's theory was based. The studies of Colin Clark, Sir Josiah Stamp, and others show that the professional and white-collar classes have been gaining in numbers greatly, at the expense of the unskilled workers, especially during the last quarter of a century. The same trend is apparent in America, where the white-collar workers since 1870 have expanded sixfold in comparison with other groups.¹⁰ Moreover, the standard of living of the skilled workers and the clerical, professional, and commercial classes has risen in spite of the fact that they constitute an increasing percentage of the population. And the burden of unemployment bears far less heavily upon them than upon the unskilled. It is the latter, in the main, who have to struggle with that tragedy.

All of this means that the Marxists made a second error. They overestimated the threat of proletarian revolution in the most highly developed capitalist countries. There was no middle class of any size in Russia. In Germany the members of that class were subordinated in the feudal structure and never had great political power, and, in addition, they were impoverished by war and subsequent inflation. If the movement of our people out of the unskilled groups continues, the prospects of a proletarian revolution apart from the effects of war seem remote. A more serious threat than proletarian revolution is the invocation in times of depression of fantastic panaceas, suggested by demagogues, which may so impair the operations of our economy that a desirable equilibrium is almost incapable of re-establishment.

The Marxists were wrong also in their underestimate of the ability of capitalism to make the adjustments necessary to survival. Capitalism is no longer a simple affair; there are several different kinds. There is the kind represented by agriculture and small business, where the owner is also a worker. There is private competitive business, generally. There is large-scale industry, in a trend toward monopoly—a candidate for public regulation or ownership. There are the co-operatives. There are the activities of government. There are all the philanthropic, religious, and

educational enterprises. There are the skilled and professional services. A vast deal of our economy today cannot be compressed within the Marxian formula of the exploitation of workers for private gain, and the predictions based upon that formula are rendered correspondingly doubtful.

Moreover, some of the inflexible features of capitalism, upon which Marxists counted to create "jams" in the system, are being modified. One of those features was the ratio of savings to the national income. John Strachey, the English Communist, assumed that that ratio was permanent. But the ratio has been modified in his own country. In England before the war of 1914-1918, from 12 to 13 per cent of the national income was being saved. In recent years the trend is represented by such figures as 8 per cent for 1924; 7 per cent for 1929; 5 per cent for 1934, and 7 per cent for 1935. Instead of piling up in banks or being invested in excess factory equipment, the government of Britain has been directing larger amounts of the nation's savings into durable consumers' goods, such as housing and new roads.

Class conflict also is being modified. Where workers and owners seem most sharply separated, as in industry, union agreements have achieved such a large degree of accommodation that organized labor has come to believe it can solve its problems by collective bargaining and legislation, rather than by manning the barricades.

As a result of these developments, even those who accept the Marxian analysis of our economy, Professor Max Lerner, of Williams College, for example, have been impressed by the resilience and the "amazing tenacity" of capitalism.¹²

VI

More important, however, than the correctness or incorrectness of Marxian prophecy is the discovery of how Marxism tends actually to work out as an alternative to our system. That is why Soviet Russia is so important to western thought. Marxism is the intellectual foundation of the economic system of that great country.

With all the improvements in Russia, and they are numerous,



it is clear that Marxism has resulted there in a tremendous concentration, in a very small group, of economic and political power. Soviet Russia lives under a dictatorship. The forced collectivization of the farm lands, against the will of the peasants, and the recent pact with Nazi Germany, after Communists had indoctrinated the people for years against the Nazis, are illustrations of how ruthlessly and directly this dictatorship moves to achieve its ends.

If one were attempting to appraise the achievements of Russian Marxism as a whole, one would speak of its attack on illiteracy, its campaign against race prejudice, its provision of cultural and recreational opportunities for the poor, and other commendable features. Here we are concerned simply with the promise of Marxism as an economy. As an economy, Russian Marxism has the merit of having apparently solved the problem of unemployment incident to the "crisis"—which characterizes the life of the Western democratic nations. One must remember, of course, that Russia has been operating on the basis of an agricultural and handicraft system, which has been developed into a modern industrial order under forced draft. The process has been similar to that which enabled us here in America, during the generations preceding and following the War between the States, to invite the whole world to come here and find work. It is also true that Russia has been expending a very large proportion of the national income on armament, and that she has access to a great series of inventions which have been developed in Western lands under private enterprise. Nevertheless, the abundance of work to be done in Russia and the plans for doing it impress most observers.

What price has been paid for these achievements? Marxism in Russia has involved the regimentation of individual life, the control of thought and speech and publication, the suppression of religion, the denial of practically all of those "liberties" for which man has struggled in Western civilization for the last twenty-five centuries. Marxists claim that in time all those liberties will be restored. But at present in all the totalitarian states characterized by highly centralized planning you have dictatorship on the one hand and the suppression of individual freedom on the other. What seems to have happened in those countries is the substitution, as controllers of the economy, of men with a lust for power in place

of those with a lust for wealth. And the lust for power over the lives of their fellows seems to do something to those dominated by it. One begins to suspect there is truth in a recent statement to the effect that "of the two games, for money and for power, the game for money is the cleaner. . . . The gamesters of power, unlike the gamesters of money, inevitably put their fingers into the inner lives of men, to master their wills and to pull the strings of their behaviour."¹³

It is the price paid for economic achievement in Soviet Russia in terms of human values that most of all deters the people of democratic countries from making a choice of Marxism as the solution of their problems. But let no one underestimate either the intellectual appeal or "the will to power" of the Marxian movement. Unless we can remedy the economic weaknesses of the democracies—and remedy them in time—the Nazi-Communist shadow of dictatorship and the god-state, which lies so darkly upon Europe, will fall across America.

VII

We have discovered that crises involving unemployment are probably inherent in our present economic system. We have discovered also that the most plausible alternative to our system, Marxism, involves the suppression of our democratic liberties. What then shall we do? In answer to this question we cannot suggest a program; for that we have no competence. But it is possible for us, as laymen in economics, to suggest an attitude toward our problem and an interpretation of its nature. If we cannot banish the "demon," we can at least begin to understand it.

First, the attitude. Here we are, faced with a tremendous problem. On the one hand, we have the technical means to provide a higher standard of material well-being for everyone; on the other hand, our democratic way of life involves a multitude of individual choices of what people will do with their services and their property. Can we achieve this higher standard of living and keep democracy?

The attitude for which we appeal is the attitude which accepts this problem as our own with the conviction that it can be solved. What we need is the spirit of Arthur Balfour's statement con-

cerning the British form of democracy. "The whole essence of British Parliamentary government," he said, "lies in the intention to make the thing work."¹⁴ If we have the intention in America to use our democracy to create a higher standard of comfort and culture, we shall probably find ways to achieve this end.

Why should we not accept this as our problem, even if we do not know exactly how it is to be solved? It is probably not a greater problem than our fathers had to solve in organizing the federal government in this country. Five years ago while on shipboard, returning from a summer spent in Russia and Germany, I read once again the *Federalist* papers, written by Madison, Hamilton, and Jay. Perhaps it was the effect of the weeks spent in two countries ruled by dictators, but never before had I been so impressed by the difficulties which the founding fathers had to overcome in setting up this republic. They had very little to guide them. Aristotle had said that man is a creature adapted only to small societies. The important experiments in federation, from which they could learn, were to be found in the Netherlands and in Switzerland, and those experiments at the time were not too promising. Our fathers had the burden left by seven years of war, and were divided by factional disputes among themselves. Yet they developed a system of government that has proved adaptable to the needs of a nation which has expanded across a great continent, and which has grown from three millions to one hundred and thirty millions of people. No one at the beginning could have predicted such an extraordinary outcome, nor could such an outcome ever have attended the efforts of our fathers, if they had not been inspired by an attitude of courage that accepted the great problem of federal government as the problem assigned to them by history. Why should we not accept the problem of achieving economic abundance through the use of our democratic liberties, with the same attitude?

The experience of our fathers is helpful to us also, because it suggests not only the proper attitude toward our problem but, by analogy, an interpretation of its nature. They began with local colonial government; they had to create a unifying federal government. We begin with an inherited economic system of competitive private enterprise; we have to develop a co-operative or communal system which will help to keep private enterprise in balance.

Now, one may hear immediately the voices of both radicals and conservatives exclaiming that such a dual economy will not work. They say that you cannot mix competition and co-operation like that. You must take all of one or all of the other. To the radicals we would reply that they cannot have our entire economy communally owned, because the immense weight of American tradition is against it. We have grown up under a system of private enterprise, and the habits connected with that system are so deeply ingrained that it could not be overthrown without a revolution. And considering the amount of individualism there is in agriculture and in business, large and small, any attempt at revolution would go heavily against the revolutionists.

To the conservatives we would say: You don't want a co-operative or communal system? But you have it already. Do you wish to have the tariff abolished, and no more road building to help the automobile industry? And who was it that asked for the appointment of the Interstate Commerce Commission, for subsidies for railroads and shipping, and for all the privileges which large-scale business enjoys under the corporation law? Is it not true, moreover, that you conservatives have had an extraordinarily large amount of political control in this country ever since the war of 1861-1865? From 1870 to 1932, sixty-two years elapsed. During that period Republicans ruled from the White House for forty-six years and two Democrats, Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson, for sixteen. But surely, you would not call Grover Cleveland anything but a conservative, and Wilson was followed by Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover—who did not repeal any of Wilson's important legislation. The upshot of all this conservative control, from 1870 to 1932, is to be summed up in Stuart Chase's remark in February, 1932—more than a year before the New Deal came into power—"It is probable at the present time . . . that more than half the economic activity of this country is in the zone of collectivism, broadly interpreted, rather than in the zone of free competition and traditional capitalism."¹⁵ So if we have a dual system of a sort now, we have to reply to the conservatives, "Not only do we have it, but you made it."

Given the dual economy that we have, our task seems to be, to make it work in balance, each part functioning in a comple-

mentary fashion with the other part. If private enterprise is to operate efficiently, we know that savings must flow out into private investments or public expenditures. Since the concentration of wealth makes excessive saving compulsory, such concentration is not only unethical but uneconomic. It interferes with the balance of our economy and helps to break it down. If crises are to be smoothed out in a measure, then prices must be made more flexible; for the rigid elements of our economy are apparently one of the causes of prolonged depression. Furthermore, if competition is to be prevented from degenerating into the exploitation of the weak, then standards of employment and of business practice must be set up by labor and business organizations and by the state.

If the country at large is to co-operate intelligently with private enterprise, then there must be an Economic General Staff for the nation (an objective sought by the British Liberal Party as far back as 1928), whose functions would be advisory, but whose statistical, publicity, and conference powers would be large.* The difficulty in the way of such a proposal at present is that conservatives refuse to recognize the fact that we have and shall continue to have a dual economy, while liberals are deeply divided among themselves as to how to make that economy work. Max Lerner, for instance, says there are nine different schools of economic policy within the Roosevelt Administration alone.¹⁶ A larger agreement as to the nature of our economy is probably necessary before we shall have agreement as to how to improve it.

If depressed periods are to continue to be a feature of our economy, government must be prepared to act as a compensating factor in helping to provide employment, plowing back the savings of the nation into schools, housing, and conservation projects. Is it too much to expect, moreover, that the spirit of self-criticism and of social responsibility will continue to grow in labor, business, and professional organizations? The greater the responsibility assumed by such organizations for self-discipline, the less the burden placed upon government.

It is in such directions that we may expect our economy to grow in material productivity and moral health, for it will retain the values of private initiative and responsibility along with the

* Note the article by William Hard in *The Reader's Digest* for September, 1939, which voices essentially this demand, but not in these terms.

values inherent in concern for the welfare of the community as a whole.

A parable of the relationship between our co-operative and largely governmental economy and that of competitive private enterprise, I found a few months ago on an Illinois farm. There was a field on that farm which I had known for years. For more than a generation it had produced good crops. Then its slopes began to show the effects of constant cropping and erosion. When I saw it recently the soil engineers had been at work upon it. As I stood there in the center of the field, it seemed to be speaking to me after this fashion:

"Hello, old friend. You have known me for a long time. It was a gay life that I led back there when you first knew me. Year after year I produced a good harvest. All my master had to do was to plant the seed; with the aid of rain and sunshine, I did the rest. But of late years the water was washing my life away. Weeds grew and gullies appeared. At last my master turned to these engineers. They built a dam at the bottom of my slopes. They cut water courses around my sides and sodded them with tough grass. They planted bushes with spreading roots to hold the soil in the steep places. Come back in ten years. The cattle will be grazing here again, and a little later you will see a fine crop of hay."

In that field the forces of nature, so productive and yet so destructive, seem to me to represent the forces of our economic life, inspired by self-interest, that express themselves through our basic system of private enterprise. The work of the soil engineers represents the co-operative economy, largely under the direction of government, which supplements the private economy. As the engineers do not attempt to offer a substitute for the natural forces, but to conserve and direct them, so the wise government will not attempt to do everything, but will stimulate and guide the productive energies of the people as they seek both individual and social ends. To make the parallel the more obvious, the field under the scientific treatment of the engineers should be made to produce more than ever before. At least that is the reasonable hope for our dual economy in the United States of America.

VIII

What is the responsibility of the churches in relation to this task? The first feeling many of us may have after surveying the problem centering in the economic crisis is a feeling of relief. We may say, "The situation is so complicated that we cannot be responsible for it."

Certainly it must be an unusual situation where the churches become responsible for specific economic measures. Take such an issue as the ratio of savings to investment, which many able thinkers regard as a pivotal issue determining whether we shall have prosperity or depression. Who of us lay economists is going to try to commit the church to the capital gains tax or the surplus profits tax as methods of dealing with that issue? Even the issue itself may not remain before us in its present form. In preparing to write this chapter, the author was impressed by the number of economists who have emphasized this issue; but in looking over one of the most authoritative treatises of a quarter of a century ago he found no mention of it. What will be the outlook of economists a quarter of a century from now? The theory may be still further refined so that we shall hardly recognize it, or war may destroy the very facts on which the theory was based.

We have to keep in mind that the more impersonal our economy, the more technical many of the remedies for its ills; and the more interdependent it is, the more these remedies will be followed at a distance by results which are not anticipated. But popular assemblies, no matter how well intentioned, are likely to be impatient with such a view of things. The Townsend Plan or the Social Credit Plan—something which looks like money immediately in pocket—is more likely to appeal to them. Sympathetic people readily respond to a plea for higher wages, but in some instances higher wages may have an upsetting effect upon the balance of our economy which the average person has not foreseen. We are accustomed to the fact that businessmen control their output, trying to keep volume from destroying a profitable price level. We cast surly glances at the farmers when they try to do the same. No! It is rarely the responsibility of the churches to design specific economic remedies.

Let us turn then to what the churches really can do.

1. We may say that it is surely the business of the churches to keep the nation aware of the plight of its underprivileged groups. It can throw the searchlight of publicity on needs which ought to be met. This responsibility belongs to the church from its very nature. I remember that Dean Woodbridge, of Columbia University, once called my attention to the fact that the two most important questions in the world are the first two questions which God puts to man in the Bible. The first, "Where art thou, Adam?" raises the issue of man's relationship to the Eternal, to the ultimate nature of things; the second question, the Lord's inquiry of Cain, "Where is thy brother?" raises the issue of man's relationship to his fellows. The dean observed that the Lord did not tell Cain that he was his brother's keeper. No man can keep another man. What man *is* responsible for is knowing where his brother is. To the German of today God says, "Where is thy Jewish brother?" To the Japanese, "Where is thy Chinese brother?" To the white man He says, "Where is thy Negro brother?" Suppose the underprivileged and the oppressed were continuously within the focus of our thought, would it not be inevitable that men would seek ways to relieve their condition? The churches might become, if they chose, sensitive nerve endings to make the world aware of the conditions which produce its misery.

2. Moreover, the church at large has a responsibility for helping this generation to see its economic task in a moral and spiritual perspective. That was what the Hebrew prophets did with the political tasks of their day. That was what Paul did with the task of Christian evangelization. The prophets and Paul had a philosophy of history that enabled them to interpret men's lives in the context of God's purpose for the world. The Puritan preachers in Britain and America performed the same service for their congregations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

A fundamental feature of that larger perspective in which we must see our economic task is the presence of a slowly growing co-operative order in the world. The trend toward large-scale business means something. The trend toward larger national units means something. The trend toward a totalitarian economy means something. How clearly we are seeing that no business, no industry, no labor organization "liveth to itself" any more. And

no nation. Was it not just two years ago (October, 1938) that Poland—to use Norman Thomas' vivid phrase—was playing jackal to Germany's lion tearing off Teschen from Czecho-Slovakia while the Reich devoured the rest? How little Poland knew "the day of her visitation." In every phase of our experience the sense of the necessity of a larger order of co-operation must increase. It must be dramatized and made vivid to the people at the grass roots as well as to those in positions of wide influence.

3. The church has also the responsibility of helping to develop a type of man able to co-ordinate the various elements of our economy in the service of the common good. Walt Whitman celebrated the democratic man; our more popular hero has been the successful individualist, the man accredited by making money or spectacular achievements; the man needed now is the co-ordinator, who can interpret different groups and their interests to each of the others and organize them in the pursuit of ends which will benefit all. One thinks of Owen D. Young in the field of business, Sidney Hillman in labor, and John R. Mott in religion as representing the type of co-ordinating leadership the church should encourage.

A parallel to the task of the church in developing a new ideal man is to be found in Nazi Germany. The Hitler government has had a dream of a greater Germany, won by military conquest. But it has known that only men with a certain personal ideal will be able to devote themselves with full heart to such a dream. So it has deliberately created the ideal of the heroic man, the man who fights and gladly dies to achieve the goal of the greater Germany. Unless the larger co-operative order can capture the imagination of youth as furnishing a personal ideal of life, it is not likely to become a dominant organizing conception in social relations. And unless such a personal ideal becomes regnant in the churches, we are not likely to see it realized in a sphere so filled with antagonisms as is the economic.

4. Most important of all, the church is responsible for maintaining the faith that such a co-operative order, growing ever more significant, is within the purpose of God. Without such a faith it is doubtful if such an order can ever be achieved on a scale adequate to human need. The obstacles in its way are too formidable. How much more formidable they have grown during these

latter years! Suppose you take God out of the picture. Suppose a co-operative order is only a projection of the desires of certain kindly folks. What are the odds on its realization over against the kind of world that Hitler wants? One set of desires over against another! Well, one thing is clear: the people who are likely to see their ideals triumph are those who believe there is something more in them than simply their desires.

IX

We began with the question whether Christianity and democracy can banish the "demons" of unemployment, insecurity, and war which have been so potent in developing the dictatorships abroad. We have confined our attention to unemployment and insecurity, which grow out of "the economic crisis." The "demon" of war requires a treatment all its own, to which we shall immediately proceed.

But limiting our inquiry to the economic "demons," have we answered the question with which we started? No. We have tried to give it a setting in the facts and tendencies of the times so that we might approach it with greater understanding. We have also tried to see some of the contributions the churches might make to a satisfactory answer. We have come to a close on the note of faith. It is on that note that we must terminate the discussion of all great questions. But faith itself is creative. As long as faith exists one works for deeper insight, and one expects more complete answers.

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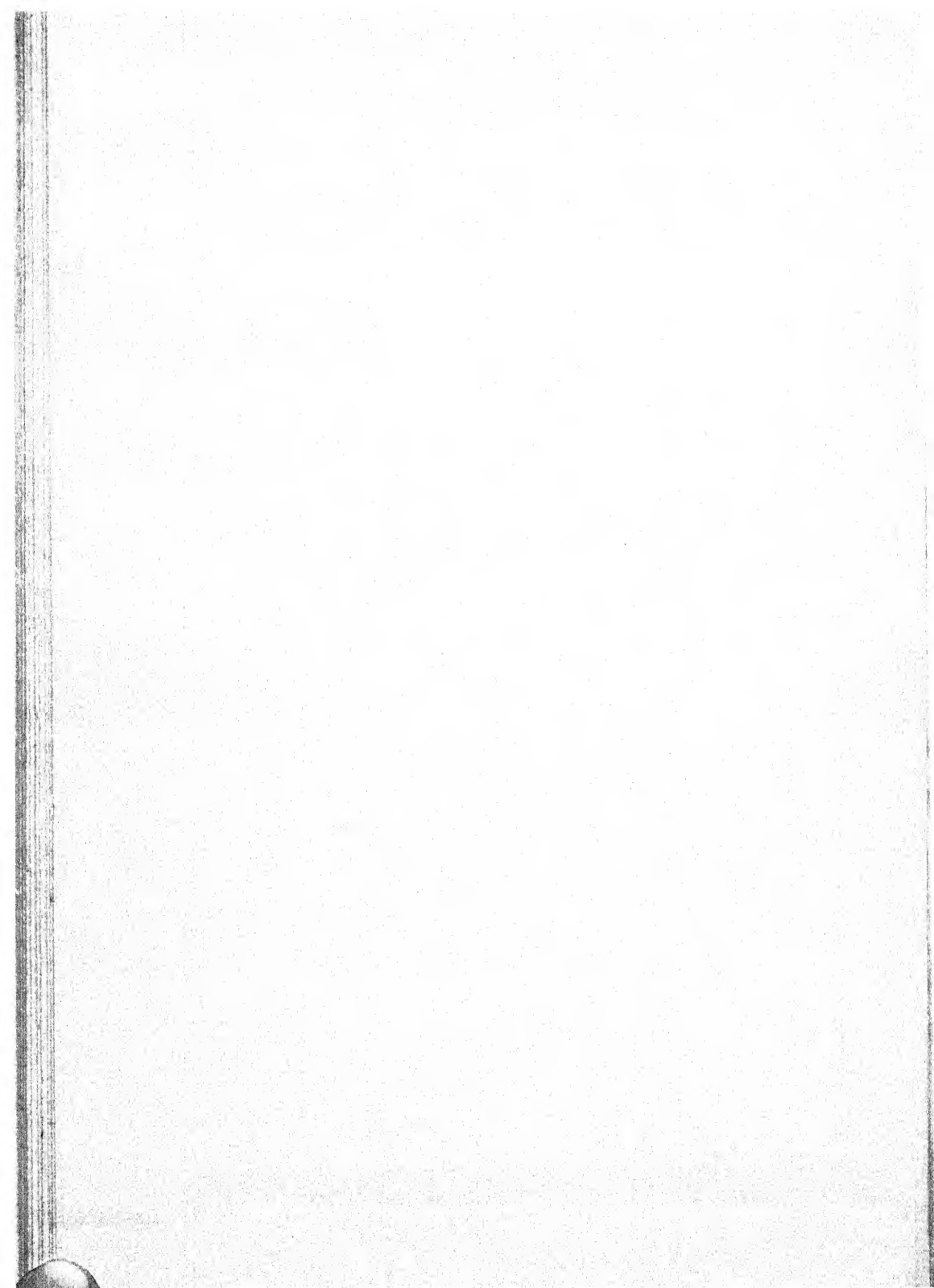
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THE STRUGGLE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORDER

5



THE STRUGGLE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORDER

5

THE one issue of public life that engrosses the attention of everyone at the present moment is that of peace and war. In our generation there is no issue by which Christianity and democracy are going to be more severely tested.

The fact that this issue has recently been thrust upon us again, and in an overwhelming form, has brought profound dismay to everyone sensitive to human misery. Our memories conspire with contemporary events to produce this feeling. A few months ago I received a letter from France, from a friend whom I knew when he was with the French army in front of Verdun. At that time he wrote, "We fight that this may not come to our children." Now he writes, that after sending his wife and children away to a safer locality, he is again getting into his uniform. I recall kneeling beside a dying German soldier who lay on the ground under the great leafy trees of the St. Mihiel salient, and saying to myself as I noted the fineness of his features and the spiritual cast of his face, "To think that we have been fighting men like him!" I remember coming back to the homeland on a transport in November, 1918. I had been assigned a watch in the "crow's nest" from 2:00 to 4:00 A.M. As I stood there night after night, looking out upon the sea, one thought kept hammering away in my mind, "This must not happen again." To prevent the recurrence of such a war, through the organization of world peace, seemed of all objects of life the one most worthwhile.

Nevertheless, here we are. After a succession of tragedies—the occupation of Manchuria by Japan in 1931, the conquest of Ethiopia by Italy, the reoccupation of the Rhineland and the scrapping of the Locarno treaty by Hitler, the ghastly civil war in Spain, the annexation of Austria and Czecho-Slovakia by Germany's Third Reich—here we are, beholding another titanic struggle between the western democracies on the one hand and



Germany on the other. Poland has received a mortal blow. Finland has been invaded by Russia. Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France have been overrun by the conqueror. Italy has entered the war. Eastern Europe is in a turmoil. The freedom of Britain is in jeopardy. In our country there is the sense of foreboding. How could it be otherwise, with Europe and Asia locked in a desperate struggle between combatants armed with all the devices for human slaughter that modern science can invent?

Where did we lose the way? Or were we ever on the way? Is there a way to peace that the world can find in our time? Can we in America, with our Christian and our democratic inheritance, help to find that way? If so, what must we do? Such questions are in the minds of vast multitudes. We cannot answer all of them. Perhaps we can answer none of them. But we cannot avoid asking them. If this is our appointment with destiny, we had better consider such questions now, and as thoughtfully and conscientiously as possible.

I

Back in 1921, in a letter to the Church Peace Union, General Tasker H. Bliss, former Chief of Staff of our army, laid the task of preventing war directly on the consciences of "the professing Christians of the United States." He said, "If another war like the last should come, they will be responsible for every drop of bloodshed."¹ That is a terribly somber and searching word for us to read today. The present condition of the world tells us that we have failed in the task which General Bliss committed to us. If we have failed, one reason must lie in the attitudes toward war that have dominated the teaching of the church. Probably there is no better way to begin our study of what we can do about war than to ask what those attitudes have been.

At the risk of undue simplification, we may say that there have been two dominant attitudes. First, the attitude which refuses participation in war under any circumstances—the attitude of the pacifist. Second, the attitude which accepts participation in war, in obedience to the command of the state—the attitude of the patriot. There are variations in, and exceptions to, these atti-

tudes, some of which we shall note. But it is important now to remember that refusal to participate in war, and acceptance of responsibility for war are characteristic Christian attitudes of long standing.

The attitude which refuses participation in war is the older of the two. It was a marked feature of Christian ethics in the period before Constantine. The argument presented by the Church Fathers in support of this attitude was a mixture of Christian tradition and reasoned observation. Almost all the arguments against war in modern pacifist literature were present in the literature of ancient Christianity. Christians said war was contrary to their religion, for their religion taught them to love their enemies (Matt. 5). It was the destroyer of human society. It was unnecessary, because human nature could be changed so that men would not go to war. Their own experience of conversion proved the possibility of such a change. In addition, army life was contaminated by all sorts of idolatrous practices, including the worship of the emperor—in which Christians could not share.

This attitude, voiced so eloquently, for instance, in the writings of Tertullian, did not persist as the dominant attitude of Christians after their religion had become the official cult of the Roman Empire. In the period before Constantine, Christians were sometimes expelled from the army; by A.D. 415 only Christians were allowed in the army.

But the tradition of pacifism remained. It was characteristic of those groups in the Middle Ages—such as the Waldenses—that sought to embody once more the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount. Following the Protestant Reformation, pacifism became a basic element in the teaching of such sects as the Quakers, the Mennonites, and the Brethren. During the last half-century, and particularly since the World War of 1914–1918, it has also become the attitude of a considerable number of Christians who belong to various denominations, which are not officially committed to the doctrine.

The reasons for the growth of pacifism in recent years are apparent to everyone. The memories of the human misery and the waste in substance and life incident to the war of 1914–1918 are still vivid in the minds of millions. But war today must be even more costly than it was a quarter of a century ago. Through

military conscription, every home has been made responsible for sending its sons into the fiery furnace. Bombs showered upon cities by airplanes can carry carnage and desolation to civilians, to women and children, as well as to armies at the front. Behind the battle lines, the entire economy of the nations must be organized for the purposes of military victory. No matter what the sacrifice all rights or liberties which interfere with or threaten that victory must be suppressed.

Moreover, war comes now to disrupt an economic world that has grown increasingly interdependent, that needs peace and security to operate its machinery for the production and distribution of goods. It comes to a world which modern medicine and material comfort have made more sensitive than ever to suffering and pain. It comes to a world which realizes that the suffering and pain are not wholly the decrees of fate, but the results of human pride, stupidity, and ill-will. It comes to drive back into the jungle of animal passion and bitterest want a world that had caught a glimpse of the abolition of poverty and the creation of a more abundant life through the instruments of science. Never in the past has war come at a time when its possible gains seemed more illusory. How wearily does this Samson of war-burdened humanity rise to the cry, "The Philistines are upon thee!"

All such facts and observations the pacifism of the present is utilizing to the full. They are all being fitted together by such thinkers as Aldous Huxley into the pattern of a philosophy whose basic tenets are: "The means control the ends," "War can only produce more war." It is doubtful whether the case for pacifism was ever stronger than it is today.

Yet in spite of the horrors of war and the conviction of its vast futility, war is here again and in a form that threatens to become universal. And in spite of the most widespread and persuasive propaganda for pacifism—continued over a period of decades in one of the freest of the democracies, Britain—less than two per cent of the young men called up in Great Britain's first draft asked exemption on the ground that they were conscientious objectors; and a recent letter from an informed observer says that there are probably not more than ten conscientious objectors in the whole of France. Why should this be?

II

One answer is certainly to be found in the fact that there is another attitude toward war, approved in the history of the church, the attitude which sanctions participation in war in obedience to the command of the state. We have termed this the attitude of the patriot. We have already pointed out the dominance of pacifism in the early church. That attitude ceased to control the leaders of the church after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. When Rome is threatened, in A.D. 410, by Alaric the Goth, we see Innocent I seeking military protection for the city from the emperor at Ravenna. We behold Synesius, afterwards bishop of Ptolemais, beseeching the emperor of the East to recruit an army for use against the barbarians. In A.D. 451, Bishop Aignan leads the people of Orleans in the defence of their city against the Huns.

Why such leaders are no longer pacifists may be easily understood. Before Christianity became the religion of the state, the leaders of the church were not responsible for the safety of the state. Now they are. Once they feel that responsibility, they also feel obliged to use the means available in their society for the protection of the state.

The situation of these men is appreciated, at least in principle, by so radical a pacifist as Norman Thomas. "I can understand," he says, "how . . . even the most high-minded and idealistic statesman must refuse to take a position too far in advance of the public in respect to the method of war. I cannot see how the church can justify war under any pretext or for any cause, however holy."² Well, if Mr. Thomas had happened to be one of these ancient churchmen, who were also statesmen in a society threatened with destruction by the barbarians, he would probably have understood how difficult it was for them to separate their duties as churchmen from their duties as statesmen.

Once Christians had accepted participation in war as essential to the discharge of their responsibility for the safety of the state, it was not difficult to develop a reasoned defence for the new attitude. From the very beginning Christians had taught that there are both good and evil aspects of the state. The thirteenth

chapter of Romans had declared explicitly that "the powers that be are ordained of God," and that "he that resisteth the power withstandeth the ordinance of God." It had affirmed that (the power) "beareth not the sword in vain" for "(it) is a minister of God." The evil of the state, on the other hand, was evident in its prescription of emperor worship and in the persecution of Christians. A vivid picture of the state as evil is found in the Book of Revelation.

As Christianity became the state religion, the teachers of the church were able to reinforce the Biblical basis for the divine authority of the state with ideas drawn from such Roman thinkers as Cicero and Seneca. The power of the state was regarded as a consequence of man's deterioration from his original innocence, but as operating in the present sinful condition of the world as a remedy for sin and a restraint upon it. The church was able, accordingly, to criticize the state as sinful, while supporting its authority to compel obedience and to protect its people from violence and invasion.

With the passing of the generations, church and state became more and more two aspects of what was in fact one society. Ultimately there emerged the idea of "the Christian state," which has persisted to the present time in most Christian communions, certainly in those which have been, at some period of their history, the established churches of a political order.

As we have suggested, this attitude of Christians, in sanctioning the state's use of force while retaining the right to criticize that use, rests primarily not on proof-texts or philosophy, but on concrete experience. For any political order upon which the arts and practices of civilized life can be erected, prevailing over a given territory, occupied by people of competing ideals and purposes, must be built upon both consent and constraint. If the population is homogeneous in its racial composition, its culture and its ideals, and habituated by long practice to co-operation by consent, constraint is thereby reduced to a minimum. (Societies such as the English and the Scandinavian illustrate this type of political life.) Where there is marked divergence in racial composition and in cultural condition, and where aims and ambitions based on race, class, political privilege or economic status are

competitive or mutually exclusive, the ingredient of constraint in the social order increases sharply. (The societies of Central Europe are of this type.)

As to the necessity of constraint in an order under which human life will be tolerable, the advocates of freedom, from the Greeks to Milton and Mill, have been explicit. Probably there is no American who represents the tradition of freedom more worthily than Roger Williams. His views on the relations of freedom to order are quite pertinent today. He says:

"There goes many a ship to sea with many hundred souls in one ship, whose weal and woe is common, and is a true picture of a commonwealth, or an human combination of society. It hath fallen out sometimes that both Papists and Protestants, Jews and Turks, may be embarked into one ship. Upon which supposal, I affirm that all the liberty of conscience that ever I pleaded for turns upon these two hinges: that none of the Papists, Protestants, Jews or Turks be forced to come to the ship's prayers or worship; nor compelled from their own particular prayer or worship, if they practise any. I further add that I never denied that notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of this ship ought to command that justice, peace, and sobriety be kept and practised, both among the seamen and all the passengers. If any of the seamen refuse to perform their service, or passengers to pay their freight; if any refuse to help in person or purse toward the common charges or defense; if any refuse to obey the common laws and orders of the ship concerning their common peace or preservation; if any shall mutiny and rise up against their commanders and officers; if any should preach or write that there ought to be no commanders nor officers because all are equal in Christ, therefore no masters nor officers, no laws nor orders, no corrections nor punishments: in such cases, whatever is pretended, the commander or commanders may judge, resist, compel and punish such transgressors, according to their deserts and merits."³

It is clear that in Williams' view freedom is not to be enjoyed apart from the existence of an order which can protect that freedom. Order is also essential to peace. The longest period of comparative peace Europe has ever known was that which prevailed during the first and second centuries of the Roman Empire. Even the modern man with all his achievements looks back with

wistfulness to that period of the Pax Romana. What was the secret of that peace?

In its essence, that secret is disclosed quite simply in the narrative in the Book of Acts which describes the rescue of Paul from the mob in Jerusalem by the soldiers of the Roman garrison. According to the story, when the centurion prepared to scourge Paul, as a part of his examination, he discovered that Paul was a Roman citizen. Upon that discovery, the centurion went at once to the commander of the garrison and told him he was about to infringe upon the rights which Rome had secured by law to every citizen. The commander saw the point at once. When he is then told that there is a conspiracy against Paul's life, he sends him away, with an escort of nearly five hundred soldiers, to Caesarea Philippi, where he will be safe from the conspirators and have a fair trial in accordance with his rights.

Vigor in the suppression of lawless violence, combined with firmness in the protection of rights under Roman law, that quality in Rome's rulers more than any other, was the secret of the Pax Romana. There is nothing in the subsequent history of the world which assures us that peace is likely to prevail over large areas, for long periods of time, where that quality is lacking in those who have the responsibility for the protection of the order of society.

We have sketched the logic both of experience and of reason that lies behind the Christian's willingness to use the power of constraint and to participate in war at the command of the state. This does not mean that the Christian is bound to obey all the commands of the state, or to participate in all wars the political authority may declare. For there has remained in the Christian conscience the reservation that the war in which his state asks him to share must be "just."

The thinkers of the Roman Catholic Church are those who have given most serious attention to the conditions which the "just" war must fulfill. They tell us that such war must be defensive, not a war of aggression. It may also be waged for the restoration of justice. It must be waged by the proper authority and without unnecessary violence, and there must be a reasonable prospect that the war entered upon for a just end will attain its

end. It has been pointed out by Catholic and Protestant writers that in the light of these tests the case for a just war, under modern conditions, has become more difficult to establish.

Regardless of traditional tests, individual Christians have often refused to support a particular war because in their own minds they have been convinced of the unworthiness or futility of the conflict in question. Thus Abraham Lincoln and James Russell Lowell opposed the Mexican War; David Lloyd George, the Boer War; Ramsay Macdonald, the World War of 1914-1918. The subsequent careers of these men show that their opposition was not based on pacifism, but that they were applying their own tests of the "just" war, and were willing to take the consequences of breaking with the government of the hour.

III

How does it stand today with these two attitudes toward war which have dominated Christian history? With another great war raging among nations which have known the Christian religion for centuries, one is forced to conclude that either the factors which produce war are beyond the control of the churches, or that their control is ineffective. Both conclusions are probably correct. War is a vast evil with many roots. It is probable that the churches, no matter how effective, cannot sever all of them during a period of time within our immediate vision. It is probable that General Bliss exaggerated in putting so much responsibility upon the churches. On the other hand, we must acknowledge that the churches have great resources which might be used to prevent war, but that they are so confused and divided that their influence does not count as it should. The churches are now at a point where they must reappraise their traditional attitudes—that of the pacifist and that of the patriot—and seek to discover the values and weaknesses inherent in each.

One of the great values of historic Christian pacifism is that it has preserved within small groups of people ideals of human life which belong to the genius of the Christian gospel. If the gospel of Christ means anything for the life that now is, it means the development of a vast fellowship of human beings, united by



the bonds of good will and mutual service. The goal of Christianity for this planet is the union of all mankind in such a fellowship. Pacifist Christian groups have maintained a testimony to the enduring vitality of this goal and its relevance to a world torn by strife, as ours actually is. From such groups the ideal of a world at peace has penetrated society at large. By humanitarian service—such as that of the Quakers—to nations suffering from war, pacifists have illustrated the contrast between the pacific and the military approach to human problems. In recent times they have begun to inculcate in some of their members methods of nonviolent resistance to injustice, which may have a wide appeal if tyranny comes to be still more characteristic of government.

How far pacifist groups have influenced the policy of nations, it is difficult to say. It is probable that Christian pacifists were a factor in strengthening the reluctance of the British government to check the aggression of Italy and Germany by force. In America, they have backed the embargo on arms, the proposed Ludlow amendment, and other political measures which in their judgment would push farther away the danger of our involvement in war. But without question, it is the personal character of Christian pacifists and the high ethical level of group life they have attained that constitute their greatest value to the world.

The weakness of historic Christian pacifism has been its inability to transfer its attitudes and methods to the sphere of political relationships. It is one thing to create and maintain on a high ethical level a group of selected individuals when such individuals have an order—cultural, economic, and political—which protects them in their livelihood and their civil rights. It is quite another thing to become responsible for the maintenance of that order against the forces, within or without, which would disrupt it.

Cannot the Christian pacifist do both? An effective demonstration of that possibility under conditions at all convincing to the world is still to be sought. Probably the conditions most favorable to such a demonstration existed in the case of William Penn's colonial government of Pennsylvania. It was Penn's ambition, while recognizing the need of a certain amount of coercion in civil affairs, to set up a government that would operate as fully as possible without "coercive or compulsive means." It

was to be a government that would express politically the principles which inspired Quakers in their personal relationships with one another. The experiment lasted for seventy-five years, coming to an end in 1756. The story of that government shows that the compromises involved, not merely in the protection of the community by military means, but in the struggle for justice and for power within the government itself, were too great for the pacifist Quaker conscience. By 1703, James Logan, Penn's secretary, was "weary of governmental affairs as they must be managed"; having found Quakerism and "English Government" difficult to reconcile.

Ultimately, the Quakers withdrew from control of the state. They withdrew because they were unable to consent to the requirements of the Crown and were in danger of losing their political rights. But their withdrawal was also due to the fact that their greatest leaders felt this action was necessary to preserve the spiritual vitality of the Quaker movement. In commenting on the events leading up to the termination of the "holy experiment," the late Professor William I. Hull, one of the greatest of modern Quakers, says that these events do not represent "the failure of the holy experiment and its principles, but the failure of those who failed to remain loyal to those principles. . . . Theoretically, I believe it possible . . . to base both private and public life on Matthew 5 and Romans 12. The Quakers of the eighteenth century failed to do so, and withdrew from public life; and I know of no other Quaker who has made a thorough success of it. May the future produce one—and many of them."⁴

If the Quakers of the holy experiment, with all their advantages of political control, religious enthusiasm, and a selected citizenry, were unable to close the gap between Christian pacifism and the necessities of political life, what warrant have we for believing that gap can be bridged amid the heterogeneous populations, the conflicting interests and ambitions, and the differing cultural levels characteristic of the vast modern world? No wonder there are Christian pacifists today who realize that theirs is a personal faith and way of life, but that measures must be taken by communities and nations in which they cannot share, but which will at least reduce the danger of war.

I remember when this gulf between pacifism as a personal

faith and political action involving constraint, but which at least pointed toward peace, became real to me. It was in London in 1926. Mr. C. P. Gooch, the English historian, had spoken in praise of the Locarno treaties, under which Britain had promised to come to the aid of France or Germany if either were attacked by the other. He spoke of the treaties as a step toward a better Europe. Afterwards a well-known American pacifist spoke in a similar vein. We asked the American whether, with his views, he could have negotiated and signed such treaties. He replied that he could not. I recall that at the moment I was shocked by that answer, but I realized that it was an honest and correct one. It is difficult to see how a Christian pacifist could sign any document providing for military forces or military action. The Constitution of the United States is such a document. And if pacifist principles could keep one from helping to organize a Federal Union of the American colonies which, while providing for an army and navy, greatly improved the chances of peace on this continent, one can understand how such principles will forbid pacifists from taking an active part in the creation of the forms of international government which are now essential, if the threat of war is to be reduced in our time. The Christian pacifists, who see this, recognize that in the present state of mankind efforts inconsistent with their principles must be made by others who are not pacifists—efforts which will help to prevent the world from committing suicide.

IV

This brings us to a reconsideration of the other attitude toward war dominant in Christian history—that of the patriot. If a Christian patriot had been standing here reading what I have been writing about his brother Christian, the pacifist, I think that by now he might be saying something like this: "Pacifism is all right, as an ideal. I have often wanted to be a pacifist myself. It would make life simpler for me. But pacifism has to have an order of society to grow in. Pacifist groups are really bits of spiritual mistletoe that grow only because they are nourished by a social organism in which force is one of the constituent elements. My business has been to protect and maintain that order

of law, liberty, and security, without which there would be few pacifists."

The point the patriot makes is that order is prior to the improvement of the order, and that while the pacifist works for the improvement of the order, his own job has been to see to it that there was an order to improve.

There is no question that the patriot finds strong support for his position, especially among Continental Christians. Emil Brunner, of Zurich, speaks for this position when he says of the Christian man, "the first duty of love which is required of him is to co-operate with others in the endeavor to preserve that order, apart from which all human life would become chaos—even if this order in itself does not in the least harmonize with that which he, as an individual, would do to another individual out of love, if he were acting solely from love. First of all the basis for human life must be created, the framework, the vessel, in which alone . . . human life can exist at all . . . therefore the first (although not the highest) duty of the Christian is his 'official duty.'"⁵ Professor Brunner explains that this duty of the Christian to the order of society is not the specifically Christian element in his life. It is rather the duty which devolves upon him, because of his nature as a human being dependent (in the providence of God) for his existence, upon a supporting social structure.

The patriot, if he were arguing his own case, would probably tell us his objections to various pacifist programs for improving the order. He might say that, in general, nothing is easier than the drawing up of such programs on paper. The thing he has to watch is that an existing order, which it has taken a long time to build, is not traded off for mere paper promises. He may well be watchful, for social orders are not easy to create. It takes time to get a tradition set which enables men to keep the peace from force of habit. Symbols essential to the enlistment of the emotions in the service of the common life develop slowly. Loyalties are cemented by memories of struggle and hardship endured in behalf of the community. To the pacifist, the patriot might say specifically: "Whatever your plan for improvement is, it must produce order, an order that is a practicable development from, or substitute for, the order that now is."

The patriot's deepest misgiving about pacifism is that he does

not see how the pacifist can even start to produce anywhere an order of the governmental type. And in a world such as ours, with its great racial and cultural heterogeneity, its vast specialization and economic interdependence, governmental order that can co-ordinate activity—where necessary, by force—is essential to the very existence of society.

Nevertheless, there are two main reservations to the Christian patriot's loyalty to the order which supports his life. First, that order as embodied in the state must not command him to do something contrary to his religious faith. This is why Martin Niemöller, although willing to serve his country as a submarine commander, will go to prison rather than carry out an injunction of the government which he regards as a pagan interference with the Christian church. Second, when the state, as the embodiment of the order on which the Christian depends, so abuses the basic rights of men that it no longer fulfills its function as an "order," the Christian patriot has felt released from his obligation to the existing state, and has sought through migration or revolution to find or achieve a better order. This was the quest of John Milton and his fellow Puritans in England in the seventeenth century, and of the American Christians who revolted from the English crown in the eighteenth century.

It is an interesting fact that the most vocal element among American liberals and intellectuals in our time has been more pre-occupied with reservations to loyalty to the order on which we depend, than with loyalty itself. This is not difficult to understand. In America we have had so much room for the individual to "go it alone." The frontier was with us so long, offering release from the restraints of organized society. We did not want to feel dependent on anything. Self-reliance was our creed. Telling an American writer, professor, or preacher that he was dependent on an order of society which it was his primary duty to maintain, left him cold. Patriotism has been at as much of a discount among American intellectuals as politics was among German intellectuals under the Weimar Republic. (This latter fact such German refugees as Thomas Mann now bitterly regret.)

But the precarious condition of our world today, surrounded as we are by war and revolution, has enabled us to see once more the logic of the Christian patriot. We realize the necessity of an

order, and that order cannot be maintained by moral suasion alone. This is the great value in the patriot's insight.

What are his weaknesses? One is that the use of force in international disputes is today a steadily growing burden on the patriot's conscience. One of the finest men I have ever known was Major General Henry T. Allen, commander of the 90th Division of the A.E.F.; then of the Sixth Army Corps; and finally of the American Army of Occupation on the Rhine. General Allen was profoundly interested in the success of the great experiment of the League of Nations, and after his release from military responsibility he delivered a number of addresses in behalf of international organization. In a private conversation he once said to me, "The business of the soldier today is to make his business unnecessary." That was the outlook of a patriot who was coming to feel that war was being outmoded by the conditions of life. He longed for and worked for the creation of a rational substitute for war.

Enlightened Christians who have taken the patriot's point of view have uniformly felt the contradiction between war and the spirit of the gospel. It has always been an evil, although in desperate cases it has seemed a lesser evil than submission to injustice and oppression. The totalitarian type of war, characteristic of the present, involving civilians as well as soldiers, has made the contradiction between war and the values the Christian cherishes sharper than ever. The vast reluctance of the democratic peoples to engage in the present conflict is due not only to fear of privation and suffering, but to the growing conviction that war as a means imperils the values it seeks as an end. War, in other words, no longer seems an adequate defense of the order of society for which the patriot feels responsible.

Along with this weakness goes another. The unit of government upon which the patriot's loyalty has centered is that of the national state. That loyalty has been in part a reflection of the power of the state to protect him against violence, from within and without the nation. Today the national state is no longer able to insure that protection. The aggregations of military power have become so vast, and the means of destruction so terrible, that few nations now will engage their most dangerous enemies relying simply on their own forces. In the case of the United States,

geographical isolation delays the general recognition of this development. But the smaller nations of Europe have been aware of it, and one of the reasons they accorded the League of Nations such ardent support was the hope that it would give them the protection they could no longer provide for themselves.

In other words, the order essential to secure the values, which the Christian patriot cherishes, has outgrown that of the national state. All over the Western world there are people who are looking wistfully toward a larger order. Yet no such order exists. It has no government. It has no symbols about which the imagination can entwine the loyalties of men in order to attract the devotion of the multitudes. The most promising effort of the last quarter of a century to achieve such a larger order was that of the League of Nations. From that effort we of the United States held aloof. Now, according to current dispatches, we are preparing to build a two-ocean navy to protect us from the hurricanes of violence which blow in from the turbulent wastes of international discord.

No peace except as the outgrowth of an order; no enduring order except as it magnifies consent and reduces the appeal to force; no such reduction of the appeal to force, except through the development of a government of greater scope than that of the national state—such are the conclusions to which a consideration of the logic of both pacifist and patriot seems to lead us.

V

What are the prospects of achieving an order out of which peace can grow—an order larger than the national state with a lessened dependence upon force?

Never did the prospects of a satisfying answer to this question seem more remote. Even since the author began this chapter those prospects have grown worse so that at the present writing (June, 1940) even to think of an international "order" seems almost like daydreaming. For any genuine international "order" requires conceptions of "right" and "justice" common to the great peoples concerned, and at the moment such conceptions seem almost entirely lacking. The only order of which the world is thinking now is that secured by the sword.

Nevertheless the sword may furnish us the clue we ought to use in surveying the prospects before us, as it reminds us that in the past relatively peaceful relationships between peoples have depended in part on a predominance of force located at some point. The peace of the first two centuries of our era was due to one great power which gave to the world the enduring memory of the Pax Romana. The Roman sword reduced the Mediterranean area and its northern "Hinterland" to subjection; and Roman law, in spite of enormous administrative corruption, gave Roman rule the semblance of rationality.

The peace which Europe enjoyed from 1815 to 1914, interrupted only by struggles which were not unduly prolonged or devastating, rested upon the "balance of power" policy of Great Britain, who played among the European nations the role of balancer. That role was possible for her because she was the greatest financial and commercial and, by virtue of her navy, the greatest military power in the world. As the nation in which the technological improvements of the industrial revolution had had the earliest and most extensive development, providing products for the use of all mankind, Great Britain had a big stake in peace, for peace meant safety to her trade and to her position as an ocean carrier. The other European powers were able meanwhile to meet the needs of their growing populations through manufactures and the free flow of goods and people across national boundaries into new and backward countries. This system of the "balance of power" with Britain as balancer might be called the Pax Britannica.

Still another type of peace is represented by the federal union of the thirteen original American colonies. This venture involved for the colonies the cession to a central government of certain elements of sovereignty. As Washington said in his letter of September 17, 1787, submitting the new Constitution to the Congress: "It is obviously impracticable in the federal government of these states to secure all rights of independent sovereignty to each and yet provide for the interest and safety of all." Responsibility for foreign affairs, for the common defense, for tariffs, for currency, and for control of interstate commerce was lodged, accordingly, with the central federal government. The peace achieved by such an order we might call the Pax Americana.

Because in this type of order force is assembled at a point of common control, it is undoubtedly the type which is most congenial to the democratic point of view. Clarence Streit, for a number of years correspondent of the *New York Times* at Geneva, has recently urged this type of order upon the democratic nations of the world, but events have pushed us on so rapidly that the scheme now has only limited relevance to the existing international situation.

One can hardly look at the world of our time and interpret the prospects for any of these types of peace as favorable. The Pax Americana would require a unity of feeling and ideals and a sense of common interest among a considerable number of nations which do not exist. For the Pax Britannica some great power would have to act as "balancer." America might have played this role in recent years but the situation now is so far out of balance, that it is doubtful whether anything she could do in Europe or Asia would restore an equilibrium of permanence. Her appearance in this role would be a temporary expedient.

What about the Pax Romana? In the light of contemporary events that would mean the Pax Hitlerica. Can Hitler conquer the world? It is still exceedingly doubtful that he can. Even if he could he has no common law to give some semblance of unity and rationality to his conquests. It takes generations to build up common rules of life among conquered peoples. No, it is safe to say that the Pax Hitlerica, if it should come, would rest almost entirely upon the Nazi sword. For a long period it could not achieve the conditions of an enduring order.

What seems most likely is a continuance of an unbalanced condition in the international sphere, with some nations seeking to hold what they have, with aggressive nations seeking to secure what others have, and with tremendous tensions threatening to disrupt nations from within as wars threaten to destroy them from without.

The implications of this situation for America are already clear. America is going to concentrate on the task of survival in this kind of world. She is going in for sheer national defense. If Hitler is victorious in Europe, America will arm to the teeth trying meanwhile to salvage as much of the democratic way of life as she can in the process. If she has any surplus of power left

after she has provided for defense on the North American continent and its approaches on the sea she may devote that surplus to helping other peoples whose interests are similar to her own. Events which are yet to come may change this program, but at the moment it seems likely to be carried out. It is a grim prospect which lies before us, but our range of choice has narrowed greatly since our refusal in 1919-1920 to share in the effort to organize the world along other lines. The responsibility for that fateful decision we have no desire to assign now, as this is no time for recriminations.

VI

What are the tasks of the Protestant churches in America in relation to such a situation?

1. The first task of the churches is to search their own hearts. There must be a far more thorough consideration by the churches of the ethical issues involved in such matters as we have been discussing in this chapter. If we are pacifists let us be pacifists, and let us have nothing to do with armed force under any circumstances. But if we are not pacifists, and the bulk of our people are not, then there are questions we must face now that the relatively protected position of our nation in the past has enabled us to ignore. We must ask for instance, "What is the significance of armed force in determining the course of history and in the government of the world?" "What is the relationship of love to justice and of both to force in the achievement of order and peace?" "What must we do in America to meet the challenge of nations bent on aggression?" "What are the geographical limits of our program of defense?" "How much of our democracy can be preserved and by what means, as our government concentrates on national defense?" "What will be the moral and spiritual effects of conscription, and what should be the attitude of the churches toward it?"

Such questions cannot be answered by four-page pamphlets distributed at peace meetings. They cannot be answered, as *The New Republic* pointed out in a recent editorial, by assuring people that "'war never settled anything' without telling them what would settle anything"; and that "'nobody ever won a war' as if

it followed that nobody ever lost one either." We have much to repent of in the way of superficial and shallow thinking. We must think about such issues as we have mentioned with the earnestness of our fathers as they pondered the religious questions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the political questions of the eighteenth.

2. The churches must use all their resources to discover any trails that may still lead to more peaceful international relations. For this purpose they must seek the collaboration of jurists, politicians, statesmen, soldiers, journalists, and the leaders of business and labor as well as professors and preachers and the professional advocates of peace. The churches must maintain every possible contact across national boundaries. Whenever peace treaties are signed they ought to attempt to organize international conferences, building on the methods used at Oxford in 1937, which will explore and broaden any trails toward peace which may exist. In the light of contemporary events it is particularly important that the churches consider the role of armed force in international relations today. Only by such consideration will they be able to discover their own function in developing the means by which force may be brought under adequate control.

3. The churches must encourage, in local groups, a study of the conditions essential to a peaceful order of the world. They can help their members to recognize the degree of interdependence that already exists among the nations and the interrelationships of the moral, cultural, economic, and political factors in the growth of peace. The development of a widespread knowledge of what peace will cost in terms of social adjustment is much more important now than continued moralistic pronouncements by ecclesiastical assemblies; and it is a more genuine contribution to peace than the pressure-group politics of some peace organizations.

4. One of the most serious tasks of the churches is to prevent the inevitable antagonisms of such a period as ours from creating schism in the churches and impairing their influence as a whole. Pacifists who insist on perfectionist standards for an international order—which Sir Alfred Zimmern says will be the last great area of human life to be moralized—while at home in domestic politics we have to get along with Tammany Hall and Mayor Frank Hague, are on the borders of fanaticism. Patriots whose loyalty to

the nation is so intense that they can see no sincerity in the conscientious objector, and can cherish no hope for a larger-than-national society, are in danger of making their patriotism responsible for brutality at home and anarchy abroad. People with an international outlook who identify their dream with the spotted actuality in which it is likely to find embodiment may help to prevent the constant adjustments without which no international or national order can endure.

A friend was telling me of a Nazi concentration camp where the guards, for their own amusement, grouped the imprisoned pacifists, social democrats, Protestants, and Catholics, according to their opinions, and then compelled these groups to get down on their knees and bark at one another like dogs. His comment was that had these same groups stood on their feet and worked together under the German Republic, they would not now be down on their knees performing such humiliating rites for the sadistic pleasure of their Nazi jailers. Surely the groups within the churches of whose varying opinions we have just been speaking understand this parable.

5. Something else the Christianity of the churches has to contribute at this hour. One evening, after I had written the paragraphs above, just before leaving my desk I turned to the New Testament and opened it at random. Perhaps I was searching unconsciously for something that would help me in dealing with the matters we have been discussing. Whatever the motive, my eyes fell at once on that story of the boy possessed by the demon, recorded in the ninth chapter of Mark's Gospel. "Why could not we drive it out?" said the disciples (Goodspeed's translation). The Master replied, "This kind of thing can only be driven out by prayer."⁶

This incident reinforced a conviction which has been growing in my mind all through this study, that without a deeper sense of God at work in history, accessible to his church and to the heart of the individual, we shall not make headway in dealing with the "demon" of war and in finding the way to peace. The sense of God means that we believe there is a moral as well as a natural order underlying human life, revealing itself in the destiny of nations as well as in the fate of individuals. It means that there are values, beyond those of expediency or national interest, of

which nations must take account in pledging their word and forming their policies. It means also that those who work for the larger realization in international affairs of the basic moral order of the world are not fools. The moments and the hours may be against them, but the years and the centuries are with them.

The impulse to work for the realization of the moral order in the relationships of the peoples has filled the hearts of a multitude of persons in many lands, giving them a sense of vocation, of a calling as truly from God as any contemplated by Luther or Calvin. It is not of that "calling" they have suffered disillusionment; it is only of their ability to meet its challenge with their own resources. They have discovered that "this kind of thing can only be driven out by prayer."

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CHAPTER V

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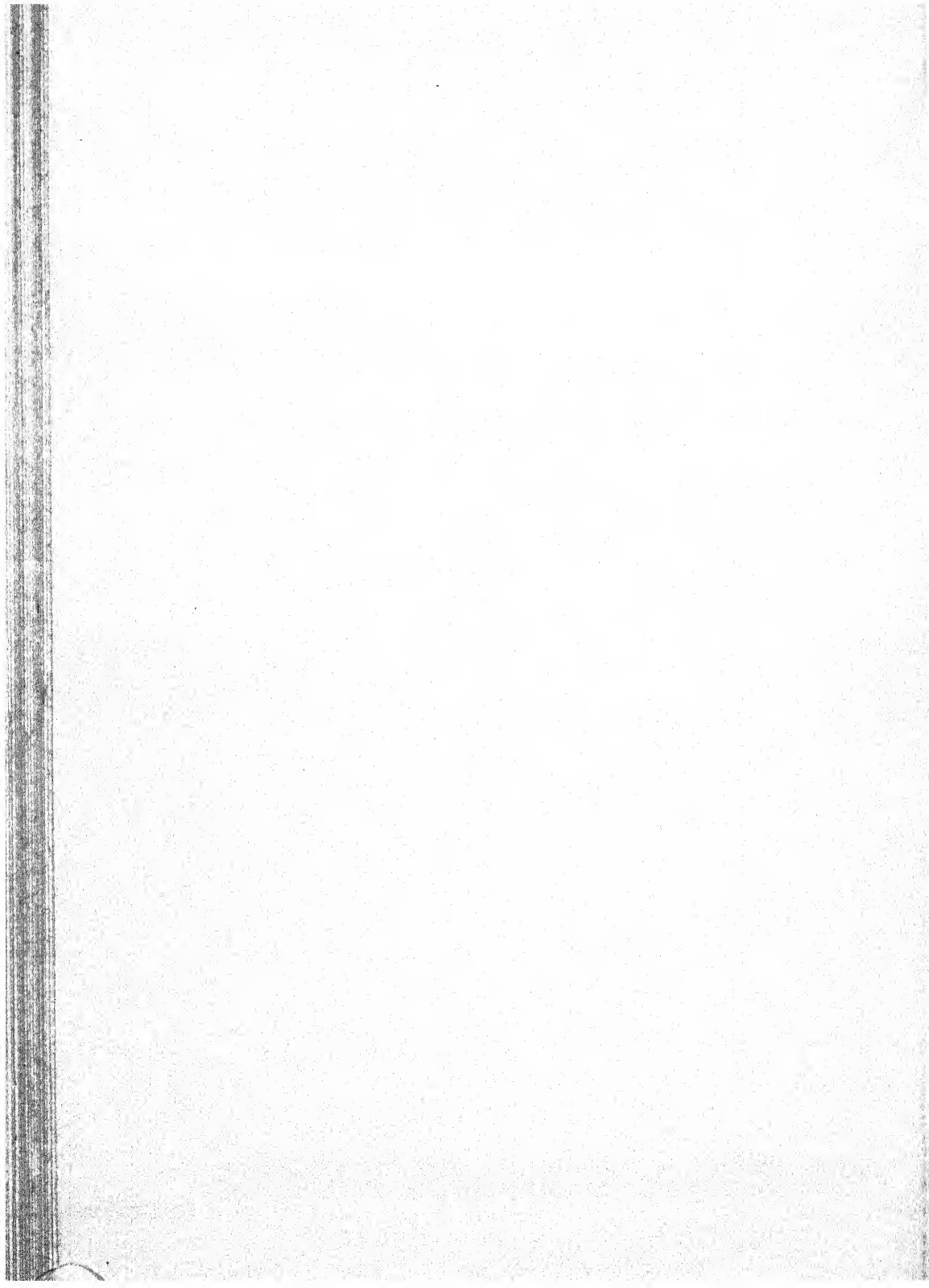
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TOWARD A SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

6



TOWARD A SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

6

WE began our study with the Christian faith. Confronted with the fact of war, a moment of insight told us that "this kind of thing can only be driven out by prayer." Evidently it is to the Christian faith we have returned.

American Protestantism is an heir of that faith. It has a responsibility for its conservation and its projection in the world. While we have been dealing with these economic and international issues we have had the feeling that if only this faith of the ages could be brought to bear effectively upon these issues we should be astonished at the changes which might be possible.

Others have had that feeling as well as ourselves. I remember reading years ago in a textbook on economics by an English writer, Henry Clay, the following words: "A religious revival which made the motives of the early disciples the dominant motives of society would produce a sudden rearrangement of economic institutions. . . . Or a growth of civic patriotism, like that of the Athenians, would make possible economic arrangements which, as men are, would not work."¹ We have longed for such a revival. We have hoped for the coming of such a patriotism. Partial advances we have seen from time to time. But in the main we are still longing and hoping.

It would be easy to acquire the defeatist attitude toward such issues as those we have been discussing. That would be a mistake. Very often in history the undermining of great evils goes on a long time before the results show upon the surface. I recall how, during my first pastorate in Minneapolis, I used to go out in the spring to watch the ice when it broke up on the surface of the lakes. From the shore the ice would appear quite solid, even after a number of warm spring days. Then some night there would come a strong wind. The next morning when we visited

the lakes the ice would be gone. It had been cracked and rendered porous by the heat; it needed only the wind to break it up. It may be that some of the evils of which we have been thinking are nearer their end than we suspect.

On the other hand, the periods of stagnation and decline in man's long story have been so devastating that we have no right to count on an inevitable law of progress. Ours is the responsibility for the decision of our own generation. If a revival of vital Christianity or of democratic patriotism is to change the face of things, it will need to begin in people like ourselves. Suppose we take our courage in our hands and ask, Of what materials may the fires of such a revival be kindled?

I

One of the factors present in such revivals in the past has been a sense of urgency, of crisis, of the arrival of a turning point in human affairs. Such a sense of urgency was present in the life of the unknown Hebrew prophet of the Exile who wrote Isaiah 40-55. It was a stimulating element in the flowering of medieval religion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the Christian era. It animated the Puritan preachers of Cromwell's army. "The day is far spent" has been the text of many a forward movement of the religious life.

Now the turning points which mark the real divisions of history, according to Von Schubert, the German historian, are those points which, when new forces finally overcome the opposition that has restrained them, succeed in producing changes in the entire picture of life. For Europe such a point arrived when Christianity, that had assimilated the organization of Roman imperialism, came into fruitful contact with the Germanic peoples. The result was Roman Catholic Christendom. To such a point the Western world—and perhaps the world as a whole—has come again. It has been reached primarily through the work of science creating a machine technology. The other great factor in bringing the world to this point is the influence of democracy. Democracy and the liberal humanitarianism associated with it have produced aspirations in the masses of men the world over for a larger

fulfillment of the hunger for life. Socialism and Communism owe their modern origin to the cravings stimulated by democracy, and to a confidence in the power of man to satisfy those cravings which has been born of scientific achievement.

The result of these two movements of science and democracy is that man at last is out on a stage planetary in extent. The world in its vastness is in the consciousness of men in business, politics, and education. It is daily brought to the attention of the average individual through the medium of the press, the radio, and the motion picture. The world now offers fruits of toil, privileges, and gifts of which men in the past never dreamed. The dangling of such prizes before the eyes of those who have caught even a breath of democracy produces a desire for freedom from limiting conditions that affects almost every land.

But at the same time everything that men crave, old as well as new, is also profoundly menaced. The science that constructs can also demolish; the democracy that incites to liberty also opens the door to the most ignorant and violent revolt against the order essential to any tolerable existence. Consequently, there is today a precariousness about the values of life such as civilized man has not known in generations. The phenomena of totalitarian government in a land like Germany represent, in part, the despairing effort of men, fearful of losing everything that makes life worth living, to erect a barrier against a world that had become too vast and formidable, and against a freedom that had become license to corrupt and destroy.

Here, accordingly, is a new turning point in human affairs. Can science and democracy go on to create for man (on this planetary stage upon which he has now emerged) a life both whole and free; or, blinded by the vastness of his opportunity and tortured by the passions of his inherited tribalisms, must he slink back for protection against himself into a narrow, tyrant-ridden mode of existence?

The consciousness that we are at such a turning point is widespread. It is producing a feeling of urgency about the decisions we have to make. Such a feeling is one of the elements out of which a revival of religion and of the higher patriotism can come.

II

But a feeling of urgency even though born of crisis is not sufficient to produce the change in human affairs that we seek. History is full of instances of peoples who were overwhelmed by crises and unable to extricate themselves. Their situation did drive them to action, but their action was in vain. People must have a method of dealing with the problem they face—a principle that points toward its solution.

Now the central problem of man today, as we have already seen, is that of reconciling "wholeness" and "freedom." To achieve the wholeness that will give him a sense of belonging to something great enough to use the resources of the world and to secure him against its dangers, he invokes the way of the dictator. To find freedom he may choose the way of certain extreme pacifist groups who abdicate responsibility for the social order. Neither way promises a solution for our problem.

An approach more congenial to our American tradition was contained in an address delivered several years ago by Dean A. R. Mann, of Cornell University (now Vice-president of the General Education Board), on the theme, "Some Foundations for a Philosophy of Country Life." In that address Dean Mann was discussing how the farmer might discharge the responsibilities essential to his happiness and efficiency. He said that some of the farmer's responsibilities, such as those connected with the selection and improvement of his livestock, the management of his land, the preservation of the soil, and the planting, harvesting, and storing of his crops, he could discharge only through the exercise of his initiative as an individual. His responsibilities in connection with the grading and sale of his produce and with determining the rate and the channels through which it reaches the market he could best discharge through voluntary farm organizations. But there are still other factors in his welfare. The rate of taxation, the interest upon the capital he borrows, the tariff upon what he buys and sells, his transportation costs, his protection against insect pests and plant and animal diseases—these elements in his success or failure are in the hands of the state. The farmer, accordingly, can deal adequately with his situation only as he acts in three different

capacities: as an individual, as a member of voluntary organizations, and as a citizen of the state.

The significance of Dean Mann's analysis is that he has suggested as already at work in the lives of men a principle according to which they may act, without losing their freedom, in respect to problems of a varying scale. This principle, which is none other than that of federalism broadly conceived, involves the acceptance by the individual of responsibility for action in the area of his competence as an individual. It involves his participation in representative organizations, both voluntary and governmental, in dealing with larger issues.

Once this principle is recognized it may be discovered at work in various areas of our common life. Take the matter of health, for instance. There are responsibilities for our health, such as those which concern diet, sleep, and the planning of our activities, which we have to carry ourselves. There are the processes of health education and health research that are promoted in large part by voluntary agencies. Then there are the inspection of foods, the protection of the community against contagious diseases, and the maintenance of standards of sanitation, which can only be handled adequately by the state.

If this principle should be found capable of application in larger measure to the economic interest, as suggested in our chapter on "The Economic Crisis," and if in a more favorable time it should be extended to the international order in a form adapted to that situation, we would have the advantage of using a principle not imposed from above, but developed from below in the day-by-day life of democratic communities.

What other principle is there that will reconcile "wholeness" and "freedom" in our kind of world? In a society so vast, so complex and interdependent as ours, there must be great organizations that can provide for the control of distant and impersonal factors which determine human welfare. At the same time man remains an individual, cherishing habitation, soil, family, neighborhood, and all the intimate things of small-scale existence. He cherishes, moreover, the right to think and worship according to his convictions, and to express himself in speech and action concerning the conditions that affect him. How are these two needs, the need of organization and the need of freedom, to be reconciled

except through the principle of federalism which, far more than we realize, has become characteristic of democratic society? What is required at the present turning point in human affairs is not a new principle, but the critical and daring application to new areas of an old principle, whose adaptability to problems of varying scale has already been clearly proven.

III

This principle of federalism brings a peculiar challenge to the Protestant churches, for there is a parallel between the situation in the economic and international spheres and the situation within Protestantism itself. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was a parallel between the struggle for economic and political freedom and the struggle for religious freedom. Today there is a parallel between the need of "wholeness," integration, in the economic and international order and a similar need in Protestant church life. The advantage of Roman Catholicism is that it already embodies in an authoritarian hierarchical form the idea of "wholeness"—by which the age is attracted. The advantage of Protestantism is that it consists of corporate divisions somewhat like those of the economic and international world, each of which claims unlimited sovereignty. Hence Protestantism has the opportunity to blaze a trail for the age toward a larger unity. Will it blaze such a trail? Will Protestantism, with its parochialism and sectarianism, furnish for the years to come merely a sad example of "cultural lag," or will it furnish inspiration to those who are seeking to escape from the parochial and sectarian mind in other areas? This is the character-test now before Protestantism; and here lies its opportunity for "collective prophecy."

The practical values to Protestantism of federal organization are obvious. During the years ahead the problem of supporting Christian schools and colleges will become increasingly acute. The religious training of our youth will present a growing challenge. The provision of an adequate Christian literature in a world where Christianity must struggle against great rival faiths, even in the very heart of what has been called Christendom, will become imperative. The impact of war and revolution upon the Christian

movement will call for the adventurous and resourceful collaboration of Christians from all the churches. The projection of Christianity itself in missions and evangelism will demand unique and large-scale efforts to which we are not accustomed.

All such efforts wait upon the moment when the principle of obligation to the broader Christian fellowship becomes as powerful in the Protestant consciousness as the principle of personal and group individualism. Without the balancing influence of obligation to the broader fellowship, individualism itself—in an age which must organize its interdependence or perish—will become a principle of disintegration and chaos. On the other hand, the achievement by Protestants of a unity that combined individualism with the power to attack common problems by united effort would restore to Protestantism the moral leadership it enjoyed in the formative period of democracy. Under God, such an achievement might push the nation itself off its present dead-center in dealing with economic and international affairs.

The practical values to American Protestantism of pressing on toward the federal union of its great main bodies are manifold. More important still would be the spiritual value of such a movement. A truly federal Christianity would overcome the defeatism implicit in parochial, class, racial, and sectarian Christianity. Only a Christianity capable of inspiring the faith that it *must* become the religion of all mankind can release the energy essential to the enlistment of youth, to the radical conversion of individuals, and to changing the face of society. Such a Christianity will strike the universal note, which can be sounded but rarely on an instrument that has as many rifts in it as our present Protestant organization. Today the prophetic Protestant minister tends to speak simply as an individual and not as the representative of a practicing fellowship. For, in the presence of the great evils of the world, he finds himself asking business organizations and the nations, in subordinating their separate interests to the general good, to do what the churches themselves as yet are not willing or ready to do.

If Protestants ask, in all seriousness, "What will restore the sense of confidence and victory to our message?" they will find that they are hungering for the universal note in the Christian gospel, and for a religious order and fellowship capable of sounding it.

To the larger federal Christianity toward which we look all Christian bodies have contributions to make. Here we would suggest only contributions in the realm of organization which may be made by certain Protestant denominations or denominational groups. From his experience in two denominations (Baptist and Presbyterian) the writer has come to believe that the congregational form of church government has most to contribute to the organization of the local church. Under this form as practiced by Baptists, Disciples, Congregationalists, and other communions there is the maximum opportunity for participation by the individual in the processes of church life, and hence the maximum of training in democracy itself.

The Presbyterian form, on the other hand, is the one to be preferred for the organization of regions. Under this form, which is an almost ideal representative system, there has been developed a solid sense of loyalty to the government of the church. There is a strong "church" sense in Presbyterianism. As the Anglican communion is a kind of bridge-church, uniting the Protestant and Catholic traditions, so the Presbyterian communion is a bridge-church within Protestantism itself uniting free-church and state-church traditions. Because of this central position no denominational group has a larger responsibility than the Presbyterian for the future of Protestantism.

For the national aspects of a federal Christianity we shall probably get most help from the Methodists. They are the largest single Protestant communion. They have achieved the national union of their various bodies. They have wrestled manfully with the race problem and have not allowed it to thwart the development of their unified fellowship. They have a genius for supervision. They are evangelical without an excess of theological-mindedness. Their concern is practical. No denomination seems to the writer to have gone so far within the limits of sectarian Protestantism to adapt its organization to the needs of the age.

As a text for our plea in behalf of a federal Christianity one could choose no more fitting words than are to be found in the message of the Southern Methodist bishops in 1938: "The problems of our world are too great and grave to be met by any one branch of the Christian faith. We must minimize our differences, magnify the cardinal tenets that unite, and consolidate our common

spiritual resources if we are to stem the tide of secularism that is sweeping across the world."

IV

A sense of urgency and a significant method for dealing with social problems, particularly those in the economic and international realm and in the realm of religious organization, are essential to the revival of religion and of democratic patriotism that we seek; but the most important element, from the human point of view, is still to be sought—that is, faith.

Faith has meant a good many things in religion and life, but its meaning for us in this connection is not obscure. It is an outlook or an attitude that gives men the energy to work for the realization of their hopes. This dynamic aspect of faith is suggested by the marginal rendering in the American Standard Version of the first clause of Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the giving substance to things hoped for." Suppose we couple with this the rendering in Weymouth's translation of the second clause: "(faith is) a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see." Putting the two clauses together, we may say that the distinguishing mark of men of faith is, such an attitude toward the reality of things which most men do not see as would enable them to give substance to their hopes.

This meaning of faith came home to me several years ago when some of us asked Professor James T. Shotwell whether the world had found as yet an adequate substitute for war. His reply was that he did not think it had; that wars may come, and all that we have tried to do for peace may be swept away. But he went on to say, "It is worth while to work for such institutions as the League of Nations, no matter what may happen to them, because the forces of history are on the side of an ordered world."

When Professor Shotwell said that international order was not dependent simply upon the efforts of men like himself, or upon contemporary institutions, I understood the meaning of faith. A reality which most men did not see, something that the speaker called "the forces of history," was creating that order. In lining up with those forces he and his fellow-believers were acting as men of faith.

And the power of faith, I saw also. For if a man is lined up with the unseen constructive forces, he has a zest and an enthusiasm no single defeat can daunt. He believes that while chaos and destruction may win battles, the forces which are creating a better world will win the campaign.

To the other factors that have been mentioned as contributing to a spiritual revival, faith, accordingly, adds something all its own—a reliance upon unseen co-operating forces which will take our little lives and feeble efforts and multiply their influence for the realization of man's best hopes.

What are the unseen co-operating forces upon which Christian faith relies in the struggle before us? In attempting to answer this question, suppose we contrast these forces with some of the realities of which we modern men are most sure. We are sure, for instance, of the order of nature which science is busy analyzing and using; we are sure of the society which the sociologists are studying and the dictators are manipulating; and we are sure of ourselves as individuals.

Over against the order of nature, however, Christianity sees another order, the order of meaning and purpose underneath and around the moral neutrality and disorder of natural existence. It is the true over against man's lies and partial wisdom; it is the beautiful, over against the cheap, trivial, and ugly; it is the good, unattained and hardly imagined, which draws man ever upward, though evil be ever clinging to his feet; it is his sense of rebuke in moments of complacency and pride. When doubt has destroyed his faith and the despair created by human failure has drained away his power for effort, it is the enduring element in the world to which he turns as to a vast mysterious kinsman of his best self, crying, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!" It is, then, the strength that redeems him in his weakness and the grace that has forgiveness for his sin. To this order of being, the ground of nature and of man's moral life, also the goal of nature and of man's aspirations for the highest, Christians have given the name, God.

Faith in God is the fundamental contribution which Christianity has to make to all the problems of man's life. It is the conviction that man is living in a world in whose structure the spiritual elements are primary. The mechanistic elements in that

structure are as subordinate as they are in a great symphony. In the symphony the mechanistic elements have their laws, to which the musician has to adjust himself. But primary is the vision of beauty which has come to some great artist.

From this, the Christian point of view, man himself is the product of an ultimate creative vision of the world. He is the expression of a spiritual order which through him moves toward its goal. His sense of his own worth—by the loss of which so many of our contemporaries are haunted—does not depend upon his flickering consciousness of his achievements, but upon his consciousness of the love of God, who worketh in him both to “will and to do of His good pleasure.”

Over against society, with its tangled web of evil and of good, Christians see the Kingdom of God. Through all ages men have caught a glimpse of it. Seen in time, it has been a golden age of the past which man lost at the fall; the principles of God's government in the present; a utopia of the future, or a millennial order that will supersede this present eon. Beyond time, it has been the paradise which has compensated for the ills of earth, or the eternal life into which good men pass as souls made perfect. In ideal, the Kingdom is a community in which the worth of the humblest comes to precious recognition and the spirit of divine fraternity animates all human intercourse. Whether envisioned as the “sweet and blessed country” of Bernard of Cluny, or “the fellowship of men,” of which William Morris writes in “The Dream of John Ball,” it has been a society which stood in contrast to that which now exists. Fools have disregarded it, cynics have derided it, but the prophets have seen it and the saints have lived for it. “Seek ye first His Kingdom” has been the legend on the banners of the Christian quest throughout the generations, though each has written the legend in its own tongue. This age is no exception. Today men are drawn on by the far lights of the City of the Common Good, as the Wise Men were by the star in their search for the Great King. Man is still a pilgrim. In his deepest and clearest moments he realizes also that his quest is endless. But when discouragement enters his soul and he is tempted to abandon his journey, there flashes upon his vision once more “the glorious Golden City.” Then his weariness is forgotten and the dusty

highways of his earthly pilgrimage are again appavelled in celestial light.

Over against the individual—transfused with good and evil, with sin and the longing for holiness, desiring heaven and in danger of hell—Christianity sets the figure of Christ. The figure of Christ has meant many things since first the man Jesus of Nazareth walked this earth. It has been betrayed by those who have coveted its authority for a Cæsar-dominated church. It has been abused by revolutionists who have sought the protection of its mantle in their effort to overthrow an existing order. The strange thing is that coming to us out of a past whose history will never be fully known, threading its way down the centuries where its approval has been courted for a thousand contradictory purposes—the strange thing is that the figure of Christ still speaks to us at all. And stranger still that to vast multitudes, from the most ignorant to the most learned, it speaks as never man spake.

How can this be? An answer to this question Professor Farmer, of Cambridge, has offered in his volume, *The Healing Cross*:

“It must be that somehow there is realized and expressed in Him the underlying divine purpose in human history which never changes from age to age; it must be that there is realized and expressed in Him that permanent standard and ideal of human nature which is assuredly in every one of us seeking to realize itself, but which is inhibited and frustrated by all our blindness and disloyalty and sin. Hence He is never really out of date, never remote from the deepest issues of our hearts, never irrelevant. Hence also we do not need a full-length biography of Him, and the scantiness of the records does not matter; so long as there is enough for the tremendous purity and power of His personality to shine through, the hidden and hitherto frustrated Christ within us can do the rest. The Christ within begins to break through our inner darkness and weakness, to grasp and be grasped by the Christ without—the Incarnate Word.”²

I do not know anything to add to these sentences of Professor Farmer's except to suggest that what he says in his closing words concerning Christ applies also to God and the Kingdom. God and the Kingdom endure in the experience of man; they, too, are never irrelevant, because they represent something in the order of the

world which need and longing have given men eyes to see. When the need and longing are great enough, then the God without speaks to the God within, the Kingdom without to the "hitherto frustrated" Kingdom within, the Christ without to the "hidden" Christ within; and the natural order, the society of men, and the lives of individuals become incandescent with a divine light.

This is the miracle of religion in its power to convert and to change. It is wrought by opening the eyes of man to something abiding in the world which he does not ordinarily behold. The divine environment of man interpenetrates his inner life like the song of a bird, releasing the repressed and muffled song within. Then doth "the lame man leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb sing."

God, the Kingdom, and the Christ giving ultimate spiritual significance to nature, society, and the individual—these are the unseen co-operating forces upon which Christian faith relies in its struggle for a better order of human life. Their presence in the world makes its soil spiritually fertile, so that the grain of sacrificial loyalty, of devotion to great causes, of love for mankind, though it fall into the ground and die, doth not abide alone but beareth much fruit. These are the unseen forces invoked by the faith that moves mountains. When we realize that they are the forces which today, even as yesterday, can kindle revival, we can only pray, "Lord, increase our faith."

V

What can the churches, especially American Protestant churches, do for the coming of this revival of vital Christianity and democratic patriotism of which we have been thinking? Of the important factors that helped produce revivals in the past we may say that the realization of urgent need is now widespread; that the consciousness that we have principles capable of being applied to these needs is growing; and that the sense of unseen spiritual forces which will co-operate in the application of these principles to these needs is present to those who have eyes to see.

An answer to the question, What is the function of the

churches in relation to these factors? came to me while I was writing these last pages. It was a holiday period. After work in my study during the daylight hours, in the evening I sat by the fire talking with my children who were home from school. As I tended the fire in the fireplace I noticed that the logs must remain fairly close together in order to burn. Often the fire would almost die out. Then the logs were brought together again and the smoldering embers would burst into flame.

I believe that here is a parable of the revival that we seek. God alone can kindle the revival. "My heart an altar, and thy love the flame." The function of the churches is to bring together and to keep together the factors essential to the revival's catching hold, and to its continuous spread and growth. If these factors remain separated, there will be no enduring divine fire in the souls of men.

If, for instance, we try to meet human needs, no matter how urgent, without the sense of co-operating spiritual forces, our efforts will wear us down. For in the long run men will not work in an effective sacrificial way to meet human needs remote from their immediate interests, unless they feel that man himself is worth saving. And man becomes worth saving only as he is recognized as a child of God.

It is true that to think of man in this way will require hardly less than a Copernican revolution in modern views about man. For in modern thought man is the center of his own spiritual world, with God merely the projection of his life. But as the Ptolemaic earth-centered material world broke down under the impact of the new problems which men discovered through the higher mathematics and the telescope, so the man-centered spiritual world is breaking down under the impact of the new weapons, military and political, which science has put in the hands of the totalitarian state. We could stand it, although with misgivings, when academic humanists sang Swinburne's hymn, "Glory to man in the highest, for Man is the master of things," but the spectacle of dictators boasting that they have exchanged the God who became man for the man who has become God has been too much.

Many influential thinkers outside as well as inside the churches are now aware that we have been on the wrong trail. There is a

growing sense that both science and politics involve moral and spiritual presuppositions. Man is beginning to realize again that he is the servant of the Infinite, not its master, and that only in his capacity to reflect God, however feebly, and to do the will of God, however ineffectively, does he have any ultimate claim to significance. In indirect ways his life is once more being oriented towards God.

With that change in prospect, the entire process of meeting human needs takes on new meaning. It becomes the work of God in behalf of his own children. In such a task man may labor with zest, in defeat as well as in victory, inasmuch as he knows that his labors are "not in vain in the Lord."

But a life of private piety apart from the urgent needs of an age results just as tragically as does the cherishing of such needs apart from God. In his *Stones of Venice* John Ruskin makes some interesting comments on that type of life. "The most curious phenomenon in all Venetian history," he says, "is the vitality of religion in private life and its deadness in public policy. . . . The habit of assigning to religion a direct influence over his own actions . . . is remarkable in every great Venetian during the times of the prosperity of the state . . . yet the entire subjection of private piety to national policy is remarkable through the almost endless series of treacheries and tyrannies by which her empire was enlarged."³

The greatest religious periods, on the other hand, have been those in which God has been found in the midst of an age and through the medium of its needs. It was not by turning from the inhumane civilization of the eighth century B.C., but by accepting it as a medium of revelation, that the great Hebrew prophets discovered their God of justice and mercy. It was not by ignoring the Exile but by sharing it that the author of Isaiah 40-55 was able to see in his people the Servant of the Lord, whose sufferings would be redemptive for the race. It was not by forgetting the new continents opened up by explorers and imperialists that Carey, Morrison, and Judson gained their vision of God's larger plan for mankind. They were told by those whose eyes were closed that their efforts smacked of impiety. We know now that through those efforts a vast new world moved into the consciousness of the church to magnify its conception of God.

Today we behold a society that needs moral and spiritual illumination as much as that of the eighth century prophets. We are called to interpret a tragedy of war and exile infinitely greater than that of Judah's captivity. We, like the missionary pioneers, face whole continents in the economic and international sphere where, as Bishop Creighton once said, Christianity "may scarcely be said to exist." And we, even as the prophets and the founders of modern missions, if our burdens are great enough, may be so driven back upon God as to discover new resources for the realization of man's possibilities. A divorce between private religion and large-scale human need, in such an age as this, would be sterilizing for religion and a disaster for public life.

The other factor essential to spiritual revival, the method of dealing with social problems by the use of the democratic principles of freedom and co-operation, has been our special concern in this book. We have been interested in federalism because it represents the balanced union of these principles of which the age stands in need. The trend toward totalitarianism is now exceedingly powerful. The specialization of industry and the resulting interdependence of our economy directly encourage the wholesale organization of society from above. The laissez faire democracy of the agricultural and trading economy of the eighteenth century has become impracticable. Only a democracy in which rights are balanced by loyalty to the community, and the centrifugal forces of individualism by the centripetal forces of service to great common aims, has even a chance of survival. In other words, only a disciplined democracy that accepts the duties which freedom entails can endure in our kind of world.

From whence shall this discipline come? The most intelligent observers of democratic society have arrived at the conclusion that the main source of this discipline must be religious. It has been our conviction that in this connection the American Protestant churches have a grave responsibility. Because of their association with the rise and history of democracy, they are peculiarly accountable for its preservation. With their great resources and their gifts for voluntary organization, they can push on the expression of democracy in economic and international relations, and in the development of their own institutions. Such efforts will also

give them the unmistakable right to criticize democratic society by standards derived from an Eternal Order. Only as democracy is thus continuously criticized by the religious consciousness can it escape the sin of pride which has laid low so many systems of worldly power.

But with this criticism of democracy, Protestant churchmen must not fail to appreciate its values, the moral and spiritual insights to which it has given political expression. The Marquess of Lothian has said that "democracy cannot prosper unless a sufficient number of its citizens are informed by a vigorous, free, and creative Christianity."⁴ Thus does he indicate the dependence of the democratic discipline upon religion. In a reciprocal fashion, we would maintain that a vital Protestantism cannot survive without the rights secured to men in a democracy. There they stand, Protestantism confronting democracy, each like the side of an arch, hardly able to stand alone. If they stand apart they will probably both be crushed under the weight of the new conditions and the new problems of the world's life. If they stand together they may not only support one another but sustain the burden of a new age of man. It is because so much depends upon the closing of this arch, upon the acceptance by Protestantism of the task of embodying democracy more effectively in its own life, as well as of supporting democracy as man's best hope for organizing society, that this is—Protestantism's hour of decision.

VI

Above all in importance is the spirit in which we face the tasks of these years. The present war may be long or short. But the epoch of war and revolution to which it belongs will probably not end quickly. The problems before us are too formidable to be solved by simple answers. The adjustments of habit and imagination we all have to make are too great to be suddenly achieved. The deeper difficulties of our economy are still to be fathomed. The organization of mankind to provide justice and to preserve peace still lies ahead. No revival of religion or of democratic patriotism that was a mere "flash in the pan" would be of much avail. What

we need is a revival that will give us a firm grip on abiding realities, and prepare us for "the long pull."

This does not mean that time is not important. The margin of harmlessness in the procrastination of reforms has contracted as our world has become more closely knit. The value of intelligent, courageous, timely action has correspondingly increased. "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day," and, "Arise, let us go hence," remain still the marching orders of a vital Christianity. Only as the resolve to endure is united in our spirit with the conviction that action is imperative, shall we be worthy of the fateful issues of this generation.

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CHAPTER VI.

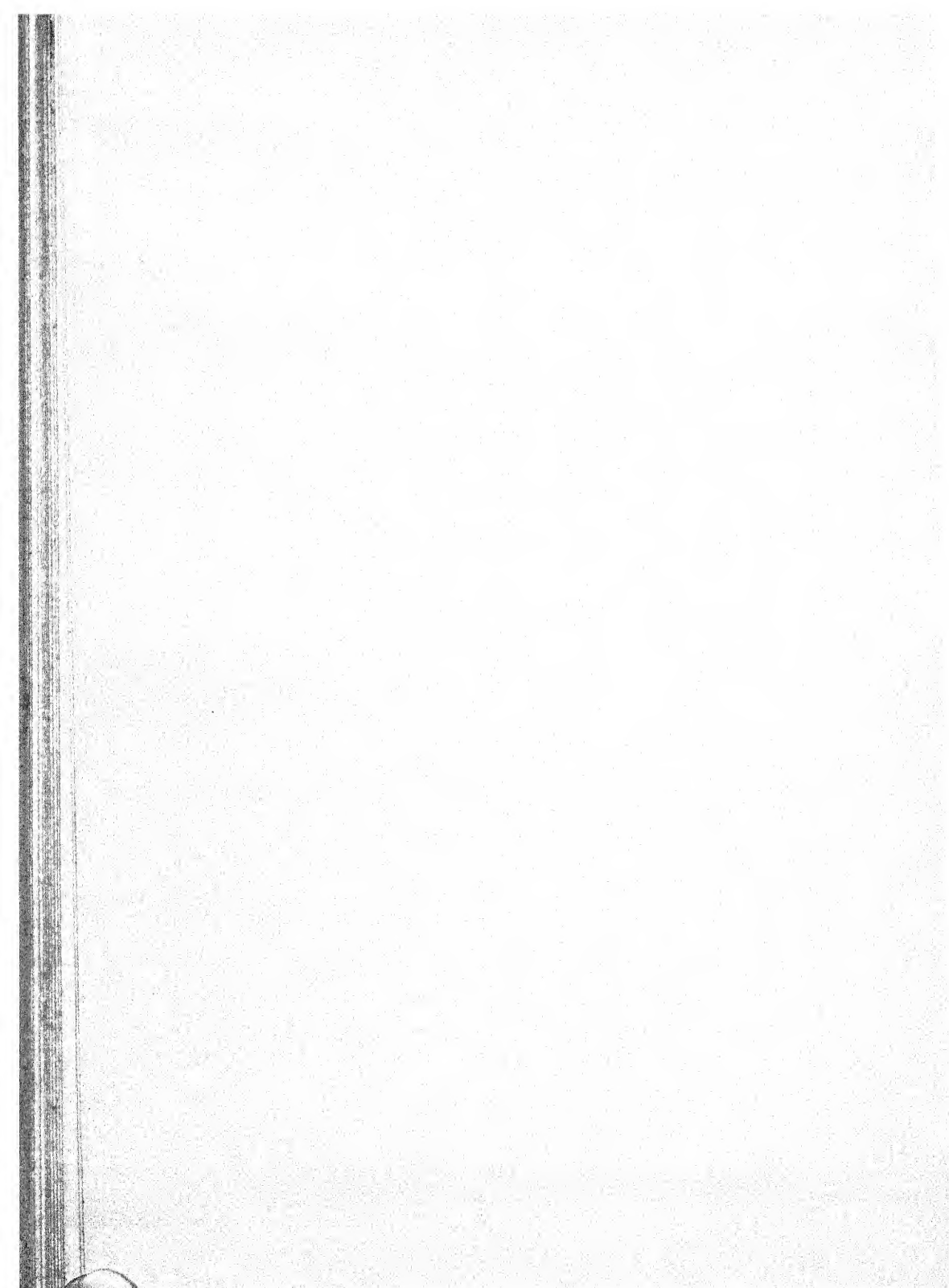
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² H. H. Farmer, *The Healing Cross*, p. 36. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

³ John Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, The Everyman's Library. By permission of E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., publishers.

⁴ From an article by the Marquess of Lothian, "Britain Confronts the World Anarchy," in *The Christian Century*, February 17, 1937. Used by permission.

APPENDIX: "THE PACIFISM OF JESUS"



APPENDIX: "THE PACIFISM OF JESUS"

I

VARIOUS students of the gospels have observed that the teachings of Jesus seem to embody a matter-of-fact pacifism as a policy for his people, in contrast to the policy of violent revolution against Roman rule advocated by radical Jewish patriots. This view of Jesus' teaching is endorsed, for instance, by Professor Frederick C. Grant, of Union Theological Seminary. Says Professor Grant: "If Jesus taught as I think he did, a doctrine of complete and unqualified pacifism, we can certainly understand it. No other course was open to any sane man in his time. Only ignorant fanatics could dream of another war for Jewish independence. Unfortunately the policy of the fanatics prevailed, and the revolt begun in the year 66 was crushed after one of the most hopeless wars in all history. It is a mark not only of the religious spirit of Jesus but of his intellectual insight that he saw clearly the futility of any appeal to the sword."¹

Professor Grant's statement seems to be a partial explanation of the pacific counsel of Jesus to his fellow-countrymen but it does not suggest other factors which may have been even more influential in determining his attitude. Those factors are to be found not in the political situation but in Jesus' conception of his own mission. That mission was to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God and to prepare men for entrance into it. The Kingdom of God was the divine order of the world which was to supersede all existing kingdoms and bring the whole of humanity under God's direct rule. It was the ancient theocratic Kingdom of which the prophets had spoken. The hope of that Kingdom had never died out among the Jewish people. "The time has come and the reign of God is near; repent and believe this good news." Such was the message of Jesus. "The central thought," says Professor E. W. Parsons, "was the imminence of the Kingdom and the call to repentance was based upon that conviction."² If one remembers, moreover, that in the view of Jesus the Kingdom could only be instituted by God, that it was nothing men could bring in or create, and that their one responsibility in relation to it was to prepare for its advent, the counsels against violence in the gospels are seen to develop

logically out of Jesus' consciousness of his own specific task. Political revolt was not only strategically futile, but out of line with his central interest. For he looked not to the improvement of the present political order, but to its supersession by the coming divine order.

II

If the prospects of successful revolt against Rome had been less hopeless; if Jesus' own view of the future, like that of other great prophets had not been foreshortened; if he had thought of his followers as living out their lives through long ages in continuing societies of "natural" men (to use Paul's expression for sinful humanity) what would he have said then? Would he have transformed his matter-of-fact pacifism into a permanent philosophy of pacifism binding for all times and circumstances? The answer to this question we do not know, and the best authorities warn us against jumping to conclusions in regard to it. Such a warning is sounded, for instance, by Professor Henry J. Cadbury in his volume *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus*.

"We must be particularly careful," says Professor Cadbury, "not to quote Him (Jesus) as the ally and prophet of our modern social programs and reforms. There may be reasons for a modern Christian to espouse prohibition, pacifism, socialism, or communism as so many liberal Christians do. But to claim Jesus as holding in any explicit, literal, or conscious way such modern philosophies is the grossest anachronism. Of course, by the same token, the capitalists and militarists have no more right to claim him. His teaching only in the remotest way lies parallel to these modern 'isms' and none of them, not even the best of them, can be wisely promoted by a partisan dishonesty to the facts of history. With Jesus' general principles to guide us these are issues which in this complicated world we must judge as best we can on our own responsibility, and not seek piously to shelter ourselves behind an effigy of Christ, nor conceitedly claim a superior loyalty to him."³

These words of Professor Cadbury's are particularly pertinent to our present discussion, not only because he is a first-rank New

Testament scholar but because he is a Quaker. His natural religious interests would make him sensitive to every argument that Jesus would be a pacifist today. As an objective historian he can make no such claim. He can make no such claim because such issues as he enumerates were not before Jesus in the form in which they are before us, and the adjustments between his situation and ours for which we have to allow are too numerous and uncertain for us to count him a champion of any one of these conflicting views.

Let us be specific on this point. Jesus said, for instance, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Now as we look back over history it is apparent that men have made peace through the avoidance of war and have chosen well. But other men have made peace through the acceptance of war, and, as far as our light goes, they also have chosen well. Among the latter one thinks of the Greeks who accepted war with Persia in 490 B.C. and 480 B.C. rather than a peace which meant servitude, and who upon the basis of their victory erected one of the most sublime of the cultural and spiritual achievements of mankind. One thinks of William the Silent and his Dutch associates who accepted war with the Duke of Alva and the Inquisition and through their struggle were able to create an oasis of tolerance and liberty in the modern world, a refuge for the oppressed, a home for thinkers, scholars, and religious pioneers. One thinks of Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, and their confreres who through war won the privilege of peace under a new form of state, which represents an enduring contribution to the art of government. What all these men won through war was an opportunity, an opportunity which servitude under tyranny would have denied them, an opportunity to achieve a great new advance of the human spirit. And the peace which came after those opportunities had been developed was of a different quality than a peace of subjection. Peacemaking is not a simple process. When Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers," did he mean to ignore the quality of peace, or to affirm that through all time the tyrant's peace was to be preferred to the freeman's revolt? Such an interpretation, as Professor Cadbury implies, would carry Jesus' words out of their original setting and transform a personal religious ideal into a debatable political philosophy.

III

We have written the paragraphs above because some Christians think that they can reach a satisfactory solution of the problem of the use of force by a simple appeal to the words of Jesus. We do not believe this appeal will be effective. The pacifism of Jesus cannot be divested of the relativities of his age and mission. His words, read in their historical context, do not suggest solutions for any of our more serious social problems. And it is well that this should be the case. For it seems to be a part of the providential provision for the moral growth of mankind that men should seek the solution of the problems of a changing world in the light of their best intuitions and their developing experience of the consequences of their deeds. The words of even the greatest teacher of our race are not likely to exempt us from these conditions essential to our growth.

The problem of the use of force in human society is going to require for its solution all the considerations brought forward in Christian history by pacifists and patriots as well as the lessons to be learned from contemporary events. What Jesus does for us in respect to this problem as well as other social problems consists, not in furnishing us with short cuts to solutions which require no further pondering, but in the creation of a perspective of human possibility in which men are able to see and to believe in solutions which otherwise would be hidden from their eyes. So great is his power to stimulate the nobler intuitions of men, to quicken sympathy, and inspire devotion that he is for us with our social needs, as for other generations with other needs, the Pioneer of human hope. The Pioneer of faith he is also, for no one ever comes deeply under his influence without gaining a new sense of the divine resources available to those who give their all to make their best dream for man come true.

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APPENDIX

¹ F. C. Grant, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*; pp. 141, 142. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

² E. W. Parsons, *The Religion of the New Testament*; p. 13. Harper and Brothers, publishers, New York. Used by permission.

³ H. J. Cadbury, *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus*; p. 112. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

CHAPTER I

Which of the basic Christian beliefs seem most important today? Which less important? Why?

How may people be drawn into a life of deep Christian conviction?

What effect would a deepened conviction of the inherent worth of man have on such problems as child labor, unemployment, war, the relation of Negroes and whites?

What are the basic functions of the church? Which of these functions is the church discharging well? Which poorly?

"What is it from God that is now struggling to be born" into our world?

CHAPTER II

What elements in Protestant church life are working toward Christian unity? What elements against it?

How practicable is religious teaching of any kind in the public schools?

Are the churches in America trying to do too many things? What should they concentrate on?

How may the sense of the world-wide Christian community be developed in local churches? Is this something more than the traditional interest in "missions"?

Are voluntary organizations going to be able to solve our problems?

CHAPTER III

Has the author correctly described democracy? What has he omitted or misstated?

Is any particular system of government essential to the welfare of the church?

How far should the churches go in support of any system of government?

Is it a serious fact for democracy that so many people are outside the reach of the church?

Is there in America any connection between democracy and a "free pulpit"?

From what sources do the real threats to American democracy come?

CHAPTER IV

What do you think are the causes of unemployment—of the people over fifty—of the young people?

What should the government do to keep our economy in balance? What should organized business do? Organized labor?

What is the role of consumers' co-operatives in producing better economic conditions?

What will become of our system of free enterprise if the United States goes in for "total" national defense?

What can youth contribute to a better economic order?

CHAPTER V

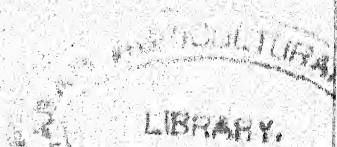
What are the causes of the present conflict in Europe? How far is America responsible for the chaos abroad?

How much of a stake has America in world peace?

What international institutions are essential to the preservation of peace?

What can the churches do in time of war to prepare for a "good" peace?

What contribution should America make to a more stable international order?



CHAPTER VI

What factors today stand in the way of the union of Protestant churches?

Are the differences within the denominations more important, or less important, than the differences between denominations?

What particular values have Baptists—Quakers—Presbyterians—Disciples—Methodists—Episcopalians—to contribute to the larger union of Protestant Christians?

In what ways would a federal Christianity conserve the achievements of both Catholicism and Protestantism?

What can the local church do to convince its community that Christianity is a religion for all mankind?

Is this period of war and revolution likely to leave us unlimited time for taking the necessary steps toward a federal Christianity?